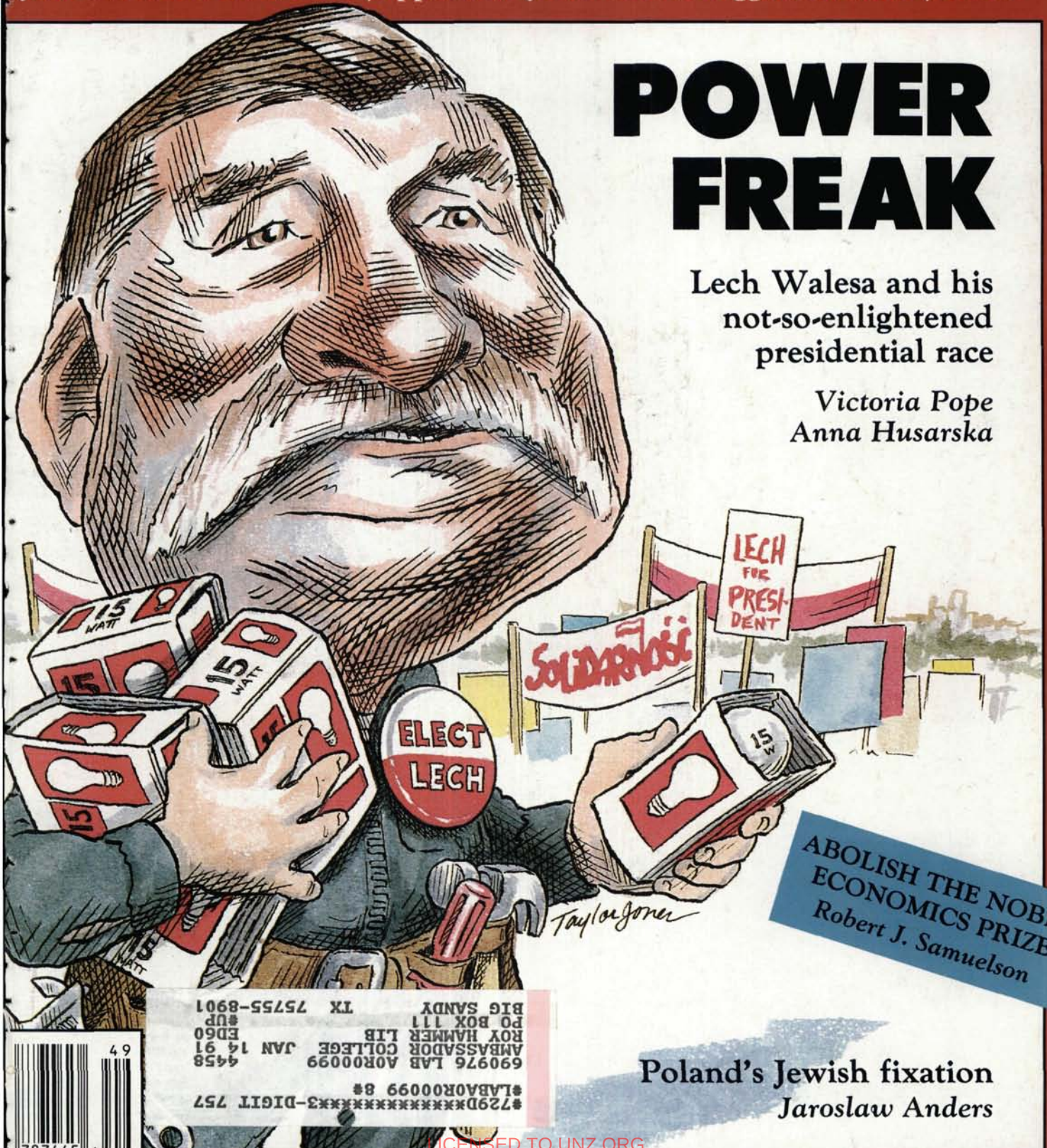
MORTON KONDRACKE, ROBERT WRIGHT: CHOICES IN THE GULF

DECEMBER 3, 1990 · $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

James Wolcott on neocon yuppie hell · John Patrick Diggins on Sidney Hook



POWER FREAK

Lech Walesa and his not-so-enlightened presidential race

Victoria Pope
Anna Husarska

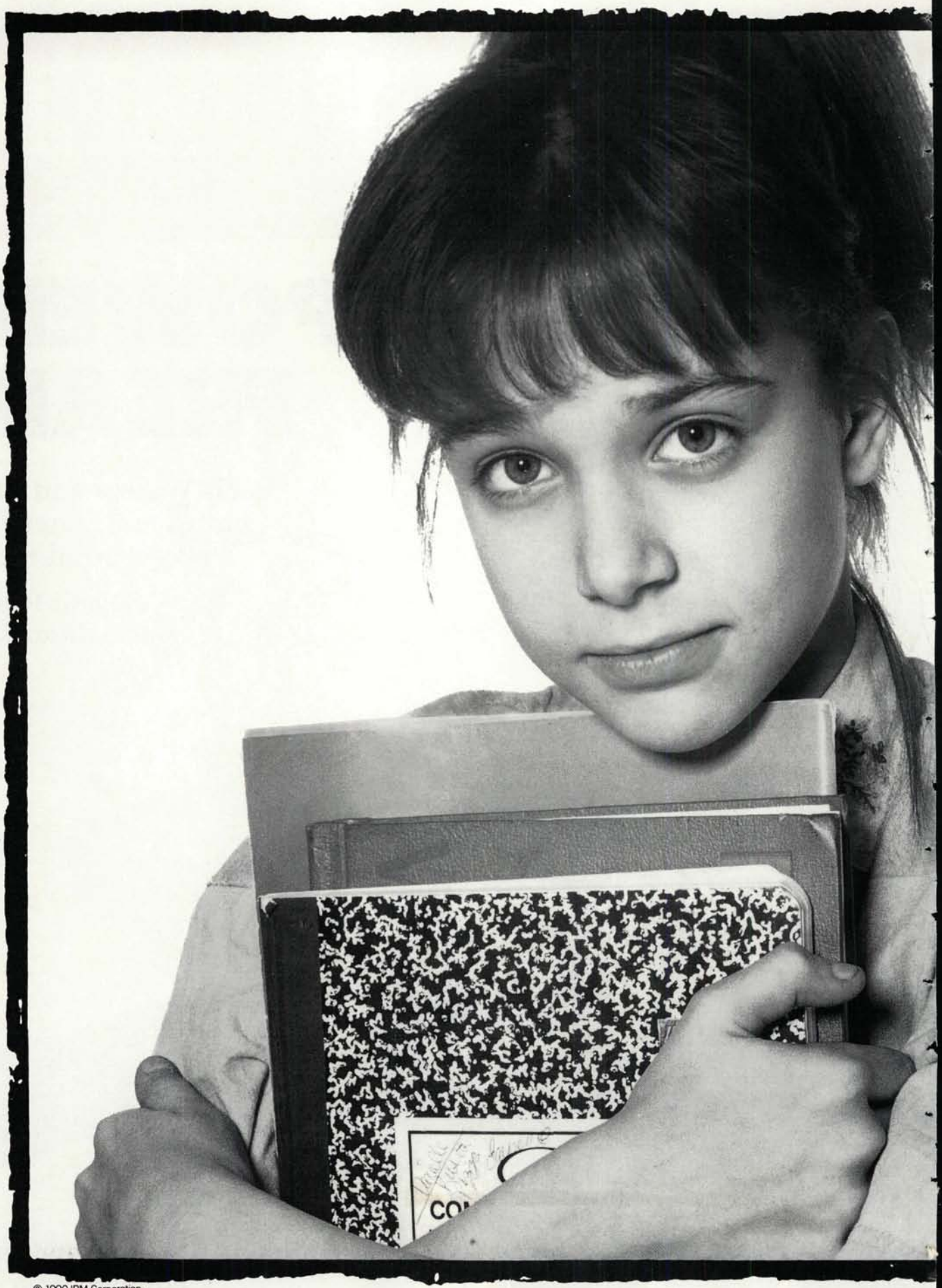
ABOLISH THE NOBEL ECONOMICS PRIZE
Robert J. Samuelson

Poland's Jewish fixation
Jaroslaw Anders

#729D**********3-DIGIT 757
#LABAOR00099 8#
690976 LAB AOR00099 4458
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE JAN 14 91
ROY HAMMER LIB ED60
PO BOX 111 #UP
BIG SANDY TX 75755-8901

49
787445 1

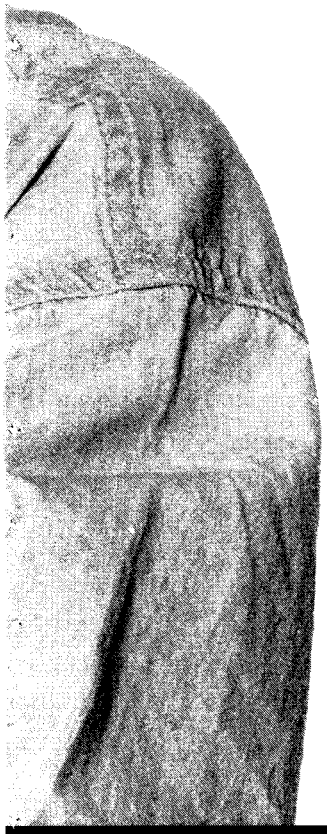
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



© 1990 IBM Corporation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Grown-ups tell us, 'Just say no.' That's easy for them to say."



"Maybe they forgot what it's like.

"At parties, at school, kids are saying to try this or do that, and they're my friends. I mean how many times can I hear I'm a loser.

"Sure I'm scared of drugs. It's just there's so much pressure. You want to say no. But you can take a lot of heat for it."

Simple yes-no decisions aren't so simple when they involve kids and drugs.

That's why IBM has helped develop a computer-based, interactive video program that's now in schools. It simulates realistic social situations, and allows kids to make choices—about drugs, about alcohol, about themselves—and to experience the consequences, but without getting hurt.

The program is sponsored by the National Federation of State High School Associations, and preliminary results have been extremely encouraging. To learn more about this program, write to us at IBM, P.O. Box 3974, Dept. 973, Peoria, IL 61614.

IBM®

Property of
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE LIBRARY
Big Sandy, Texas

RECEIVED
NOV 21 1990

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Immune to criticism

To the editors:

In "Stalking the Cold Trail" (October 29), Timothy Springer urges us to spend more money on basic research, particularly on that which he is conducting. So far, so good. But when he promises that his research may provide cures for AIDS, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, inherited birth defects, heart attacks, and rheumatoid arthritis, he is no longer selling basic research; he is peddling snake oil.

"Immunology," he says, has "contributed massively" to human health. What he really means is that the human immune system is a powerful deterrent to disease, not that immunologists have contributed very much. The example to which he refers, the use of the smallpox vaccine, is almost a unique phenomenon. The great majority of the other vaccines (unfortunately) came along after death from infectious diseases had already fallen to a low level.

While many diseases can be modified by medical therapeutics, the number of diseases that have been "cured" by medical applications is small. The massive reductions in mortality that occurred over the past century are very largely due to non-medical factors.

LEONARD A. SAGAN, M.D.
Atherton, California

Timothy Springer replies:

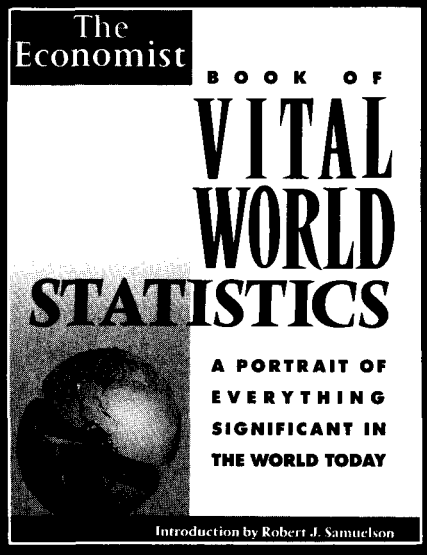
Many people appear to have forgotten the toll taken by polio before Jonas Salk, by pneumonia before penicillin, and by syphilis before arsenicals (developed by a founder of immunology, Paul Ehrlich) and then penicillin. My statement that "the same basic research that led to a decoy molecule for the common cold has a bearing on cancer, inherited birth defects, and Alzheimer's disease" was not snake oil. Cancer and Alzheimer's cells have altered adhesion molecules that may be targeted for therapy, though I did not promise a cure. And there is an inherited disease with missing adhesion molecules that can now be diagnosed and cured.

Dr. Sagan missed the main point: immunologists are no longer working just on vaccination but on basic research that has applications in many areas. I urged spending for all basic research, never for just my own.

An incomparable collection of comparative stats

What's the largest city in the world? (Not New York.) Which nation has the largest national debt? Who works the longest hours? From population to murder rates, from health to commodities, from industry to environment...here's everything significant about the world, in a singular, surprising and indispensable volume.

"A treasure chest of fascinating facts and figures."
– Robert J. Samuelson


The Economist
BOOK OF
VITAL WORLD STATISTICS
A PORTRAIT OF EVERYTHING SIGNIFICANT IN THE WORLD TODAY
Introduction by Robert J. Samuelson

TIMES BOOKS

Illustrated throughout with two-color charts and graphs

RANDOM HOUSE

$28.95, now at your bookstore

Taking the rap

To the editors:

Concerning your Notebook item on the recent Mapplethorpe and 2 Live Crew obscenity trials (November 12): when I was asked if there were instances of lewd language in Western literature, I cited a few obvious figures (Chaucer, Shakespeare, Joyce). This observation shows that lewd language isn't ipso facto proof of obscenity. That's *all* it shows. In no way did I "compare" 2 Live Crew to Shakespeare. Indeed, when the prosecutor asked me if I meant to compare the two, I explicitly rejected this absurdity. (You should have nailed me for my real gaffe—misattributing Robert Burns's best known line, incredibly enough.)

I did argue that Luther Campbell's outlandish display of black macho made sexism look silly and repellent, not attractive; the jury agreed with my "Archie Bunker" defense and voted to acquit. In the Cincinnati trial, Janet Kardon, director of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, found aesthetic value in the "centrality of the forearm" in a Mapplethorpe photograph of a couple "fisting." Faced with such expert testimony, the jury voted to acquit. So the system worked, right?

Wrong. This is a system in which First Amendment protection hinges on the interpretation of critics and curators—a sorry state of affairs. According to *Miller* v. *California*, material that a community finds prurient and offensive (by "local standards") is not entitled to First Amendment protection. Exceptions are made only if the material has serious artistic, literary, political, or scientific value (as determined by "objective" standards: hence the juridical role of the "expert" witness).

The political climate for freedom of expression in this country is equally pessimistic. Campus activists seek to ban offensive "hate speech" instead of combating it the old-fashioned way—with more speech. Jesse Helms uses the same language as these liberal activists to draft *his* legislation.

People will continue to debate the racial and sexual politics of Mapplethorpe's portraits: Does his "fetishistic" focus on the massive genitals of his black subjects propagate insidious stereotypes of black male sexuality? People will continue to debate the racial and sexual politics of dirty rap performers: How can you tell parody from the thing parodied? And while the ultimate justification for Kardon's and my testimony may be that the First Amendment prevailed in both cases, ours is hardly the last word on the subject. But isn't it nice when you can decide for yourself?

HENRY LOUIS GATES JR.
Durham, North Carolina

continued on page 41

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

DECEMBER 3, 1990

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 3,959

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
HENDRIK HERTZBERG
Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER
Managing Editor
DOROTHY WICKENDEN
Deputy Editor
ANDREW SULLIVAN
Senior Editors
FRED BARNES, SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL, ANN HULBERT, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, MORTON KONDRACKE, JACOB WEISBERG, ROBERT WRIGHT
Editor, New Republic Books (Basic Books)
PETER BEJGER
Economics
ROBERT KUTTNER
Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Music
EDWARD ROTHSTEIN
Poetry
RICHARD HOWARD
Art
MARK STEVENS
Architecture
HERBERT MUSCHAMP
Contributing Editors
ROBERT COLES, STANLEY CROUCH, JAMES K. GLASSMAN, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, VINT LAWRENCE, LOUIS MENAND, ADAM MICHNIK, ROBERT B. REICH, JONATHAN RIEDER, MAGGIE SCARF, RONALD STEEL, E. V. THAW, ANNE TYLER, NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN, MICHAEL WALZER, C. VANN WOODWARD
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
Assistant to the Editors
JUNE HALEY
Assistant Editors
KAREN LEHRMAN, LEONA HIRAOKA ROTH
Production Manager
BRUCE STEINKE
Assistant Production Manager
KRISTIN CONRADI
Production Associate
DON HARRIS
Literary Assistant
AIMS McGUINNESS
Reporter-Researchers
DAVID GREENBERG, JONATHAN KARL, TIMOTHY McCAUGHAN, JAMES WORKMAN

President
JEFFREY L. DEARTH
Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON
Marketing Director
PAUL J. VIZZA
Controller
JEAN GANDY
Advertising Director
JENNIFER BARRETT
Circulation Director
PATRICIA J. KEY
Accounting Manager
CHRISTINA R. OVERHOLSER
Advertising Assistant
CECELIA M. STEPHENS
Accounting Assistant
CHRISTINE SCHAUT
Circulation Assistant
PATTI NAJDA
Back Issues and Reception
CAROLYN PARHAM
Leadership Network Advertising
ROBERT F. SENNOTT JR.

Cover by Taylor Jones for THE NEW REPUBLIC. TRB will return next week.

4 CORRESPONDENCE Shakespeare's love was not like a red, red rose, &c.

7 THE EDITORS **WAKE-UP CALL** The midterm elections confirmed the Democrats as the congressional party. But if they wish to be a factor in 1992, they must become a presidential party. **NOTEBOOK** The curse of Dukakis, &c.

9 CHARLES P. WOHLFORTH **OFF THE POT** Alaska's gone and recriminalized marijuana.

10 MORTON KONDRACKE **READ MY SPEECH** We interrupt this magazine to bring you, live from the Oval Office, the full text of the speech President Bush should have made, and could still make, in defense of the military buildup in the Persian Gulf.

13 JANET HOOK **ON THE HILL: UNINCUMBERED** A field guide to incumbents' plumage.

14 JULIAN CRANDALL HOLLICK **AYODHYA POSTCARD: TEMPLE OF DOOM** A petty Hindu-Muslim squabble over a nondescript mosque could now tear India apart.

18 ROBERT J. SAMUELSON **BOOBY PRIZE** The Nobel in economics should be abolished.

19 ROBERT WRIGHT **FORGET KUWAIT** It's already ruined. A more effective, humane way to neutralize Saddam—and aspiring aggressors everywhere—is selective bombing.

22 VICTORIA POPE **LECH-LUSTER** Lech Walesa, the leader and personification of Solidarity, was once the hero of Poles and Westerners alike. He still is. But running for president has brought out characteristics even his supporters find troubling.

23 ANNA HUSARSKA **GREASY POLES** Yes, their election campaigns can get dirty, too.

26 STANLEY KAUFFMANN **ON FILMS: GROWN-UPS AND OTHERS** Diane Kurys's *C'est la Vie* makes fresh use of children. *My Twentieth Century*, from Hungary, is full of gimmicks.

27 JOHN PATRICK DIGGINS **THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH** In the course of his long career, Sidney Hook provoked more controversy, lost more friends, and won more new admirers than any other member of 'the New York intellectuals.'

34 JAMES WOLCOTT **THE UNWILD ONES** *Beyond the Boom* edited by Terry Teachout

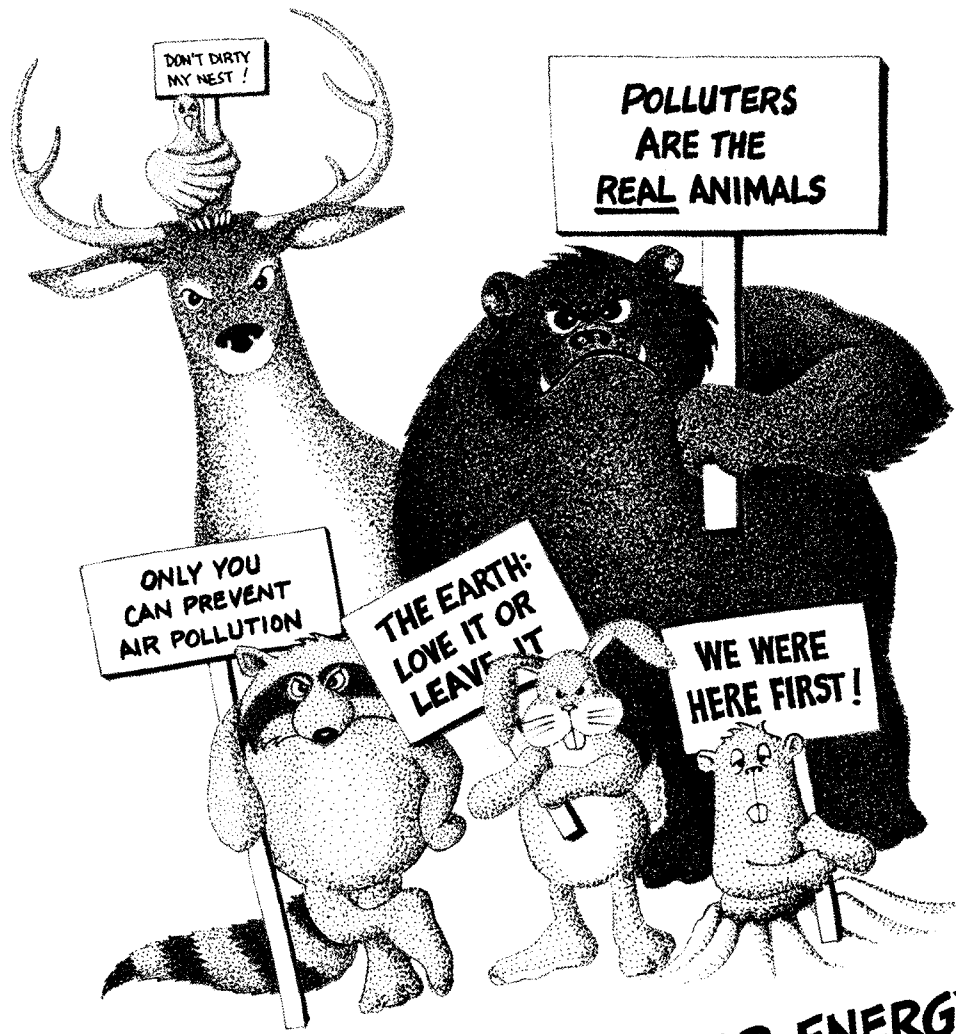
37 JAROSLAW ANDERS **THE GHOSTS OF POLAND** *The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman* by Andrzej Szczypiorski

38 LINDA PASTAN **POEM** *In This Season of Waiting*

42 LEON WIESELTIER **WASHINGTON DIARIST: THE LORD OF FLATBUSH** On Kahane.

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 203, Number 23, Issue 3,959, December 3, 1990. (Printed in the U.S. on November 14, 1990.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 8 & 15, July 9 & 16, July 30 & Aug. 6, Aug. 20 & 27, and Sept. 10 & 17, 1990) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). ©1990 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


DON'T DIRTY MY NEST !
POLLUTERS ARE THE REAL ANIMALS
ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT AIR POLLUTION
THE EARTH: LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT
WE WERE HERE FIRST !

CITIZENS FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY

Nuclear energy is one of the cleanest, most abundant sources of electricity in America. And that makes nuclear energy very popular among citizens from all walks of life.

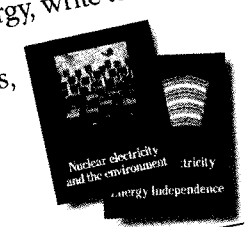
Nuclear electric plants generate electricity cleanly, without polluting the atmosphere.

In fact, nuclear energy helps reduce airborne pollutants in the U.S. by over 19,000 tons every day.

And because nuclear electric plants don't emit carbon dioxide, they don't add to the greenhouse effect, potential global warming and its adverse effect on the environment and our quality of life.

America's 112 nuclear electric plants are our second largest source of electricity. But they won't meet the demands of a growing population and economy. We need more plants.

For more complete information about nuclear energy, write to the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, P.O. Box 66080, Dept. CI21, Washington, D.C. 20035.



U.S. COUNCIL FOR ENERGY AWARENESS

Nuclear energy for energy independence and a cleaner Earth.

©1990 USCEA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 3, 1990

WAKE-UP CALL

The midterm election was not in any sense a turning point. For all the talk about voter rage against incumbents, nearly all the incumbents were returned to Capitol Hill. The great anti-incumbent fever of 1990 turned out to be mostly spin, administered by Republican political consultants. As one of them, Charles Black, candidly explained to one and all, more Democrats are incumbents than Republicans. Shrewdly, the spin doctors preyed upon the susceptibility of the national press corps to simple, moralistic stories. Major news organizations ratified the anti-incumbent theme as a "fact" by asserting poll numbers demonstrating billowing voter discontent. These statistics, however, neither established the cause, negative campaigning, nor the effect, anti-incumbency, that had overnight become accepted truth. This analysis revealed little more than the press pack's idea of an idea: something that allows easy categorization and that steers clear of controversy.

Yet the voter disquiet was real, and it was significant. Though incumbents were returned to office in record numbers, the crisis of confidence that had been conjured away by Ronald Reagan was back with a vengeance. By mid-October, according to a CNN poll, only 38 percent of Americans believed that things were going well in the country, a lower number than in the depth of the recession of 1982. The collapse of confidence is a reaction to the effects of the Reagan economic legacy, the fecklessness of George Bush's leadership, and the amorphous desire for some great change that is not being provided by the Democratic opposition.

Some midterm elections have been harbingers of what was to come. The post-Watergate 1974 upheaval was a portent of Jimmy Carter's victory in 1976. The 1978 election, with its strong conservative showing, laid the groundwork for Mr. Reagan. But this year's election was not like those. One of the principal reasons this midterm could have no clarifying meaning was that the two biggest elements of the 1992 race are completely contingent: the economy, which is sliding into recession, and foreign policy, which depends on the outcome of the sitzkrieg in the Persian Gulf. The recession could be short and shallow, or long and deep. The Gulf could turn into a swift victory, an ambiguous diplomatic settlement, a continued stalemate, or a war whose consequences no one can foresee. Events that are only half-played necessarily made the election seem half-played.

Nonetheless, certain important Republican weaknesses were laid bare. The GOP has lost all semblance of a program, or even a symbol, around which to rally. And it is beginning to be held responsible for the inequity and insolvency induced by Reaganomics in the 1980s. The party's candidates were routed in the Sunbelt stronghold—except in California, where a conservatively moderate Republican held on to a governorship held by a moderately conservative Republican. Energetic, ambitious Republicans who gave up safe House seats in hopes of riding the long-awaited GOP realignment into the Senate—people like Lynn Martin and Claudine Schneider—were victimized by the themeless Bush presidency and overwhelmingly rejected.

But the Democrats should take little comfort from the Republicans' troubles, for Democratic weaknesses too were exposed. Environmental referendums in California and New York were defeated, suggesting that the stand-alone appeal of "green" issues is limited. If the Democrats were particularly vulnerable to any Republican thrust, it was race. Using the Civil Rights Act of 1990 and affirmative action generally, the GOP shocked the Democrats with the cattle-prod of quotas. This raised welts from California to North Carolina. Efforts to mobilize class warfare proved only marginally effective (though it must be remembered that elections are often won on the margins). And black turnout continued its decline. At least three things contribute to this: the passing of the great Reagan threat; the increase in apathy and despair owing to the relentless growth of a socially pathological underclass; and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the burgeoning of black nationalism and its separatist appeal, which has been self-destructively encouraged by Jesse Jackson, many craven leaders, and much of the black press. Falling black turnout may well have cost the Democrats the governorships of Michigan and Illinois.

The Democrats remain essentially a congressional party. As such they naturally gravitate to diverse interests and not a unified message. And as the party in control of one of the two main branches of the national government, the Democrats are not truly in opposition. They remain chronically prey to the temptations of "bipartisanship." Yet it is the habit of Democrats to see a rosy presidential future through the lenses of congressional elections in which they do well—as in 1982, when the party's midterm triumph induced Walter Mondale to decide he could forget about "new ideas" after all.

But a congressional party cannot substitute for a presidential party, which must re-create itself quadrennially. While the 1990 congressional elections don't point to what the 1992 presidential election will be like, they do point to the fact that contesting it will be worth the Democrats' while—something that was not apparent just a few weeks ago. And they point to the fact that for the Democrats to be a factor in 1992, it will not be enough to convince the public that on economic policy—and on domestic affairs generally—the Republican administration is intellectually bankrupt. That'll be the easy part. The hard part will be presenting themselves as a credible alternative.

For the first time in a long time, the Democrats have the rapt attention of the country on the subject of economics. The particular social issues—environmentalism, abortion, affirmative action—to which the Democrats have pegged their party do not by themselves, or by addition, make for a majority appeal. They may fill out a congressional agenda, they may provide talking points for candidates in midterms and in local races, they may supply causes for issue-based groups fueled by direct mail, they may even furnish occasions for celebrities to exhibit their serious sides. But they are not, singly or together, a presidential platform. Unless they can be subsumed into a coherent plan for economic strength and solvency, they will be seen simply as a recipe for ideological balkanization, a battle plan for enervating squabbles over a shrinking pie.

Moreover, nowhere in these issues, whatever their respective merits, can be found what has for so long been lacking in the Democratic Party: an idea of the presidency. This is bitterly ironic, because it is precisely as a presidential party that the Democrats have offered leadership in the twentieth century. Jimmy Carter, who promised purity of heart, conducted himself as chief spiritual adviser of the United States, a position for which, as ex-president, he is ideally suited; Walter Mondale, who promised to be an honest broker of the constituencies, ran as congressional aide of the United States; and Michael Dukakis, who promised to balance the books by getting the IRS to work harder, campaigned as the ultimate national middle manager. It would help if the next candidate understood the office of chief executive, which cannot be adduced from any midterm election.

Present-mindedness has been a persistent, undermining instinct of Democrats in their thinking about presidential campaigns. Mr. Mondale believed that the 1984 campaign would be fought on the issues of 1982; Mr. Dukakis built his campaign of 1988 on the Iran-contra scandal of 1987, which seemed to demand a calm technocrat in the Situation Room. For now, the Gulf crisis seems to overshadow all else. Yet by 1992 the atmosphere may be very different. A Democratic candidate then must link an idea of America's larger role in the post-cold-war world with the U.S. economic crisis, which must be considered as the crisis of the middle class. These crises—of the U.S. economy and the middle class—must be seen as one and the same. Any drift in the message away from this central linkage will almost certainly prove to be self-defeating. The indispensable element for national action remains a strong, purposeful, energetic presidency. In the Bush age this concept might seem fanciful and nostalgic, which is precisely why embracing it is now essential.

NOTEBOOK

MORE TEA LEAF READING: The dreaded Curse of Dukakis claimed more victims at the polls last week. In Massachusetts, even after the Democrats had gone to the trouble of nominating their most anti-Dukakis gubernatorial candidate, John Silber, the voters, just to be on the safe side, picked the Republican, Bill Weld, anyway. Two Democrats the Great Mentioner never tires of mentioning didn't fare too well, either. Mario Cuomo, running without serious opposition, managed a mere 53 percent of the vote. His morning-after defense—that he's the first Democratic governor of New York to win a third term, and that he beat the previous record for a third-term margin, set by Thomas E. Dewey—sounded a little hollow. Also, the Dewey parallel may not be one Mr. Cuomo will want to push that hard. In New Jersey, Senator Bill Bradley spent more than $12 million against his opponent's spare $500,000 and squeaked through by only two percent. An Election Day exit poll by Voter Research and Surveys, Inc., shows that New Yorkers, by 53 percent to 41 percent, don't think Mr. Cuomo would make a good president. New Jersey voters think likewise about Mr. Bradley, 50 percent to 40 percent. In Tennessee, meanwhile, Senator Al Gore Jr. swept all ninety-five of his state's counties, a post-Reconstruction record, and won 70 percent of the vote—the highest percentage in the country garnered by any Democrat running statewide against a real opponent. According to the exit poll, Tennessee voters thought Mr. Gore—this magazine's 1988 choice for the Democratic presidential nomination, by the way—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would make a good president, 57 percent to 33 percent. See you in '92.

WHITE HOUSE GAS: In its final days, the 101st Congress passed a law to punish chemical and biological weapons proliferators. The bill, sponsored by Democratic Representative Howard Berman, would prohibit companies that sell or produce such weapons from winning U.S. government contracts, or bar imports in the case of foreign concerns. It would also impose penalties against governments found to have used chemical or biological weapons. Or, at least, it would do these things if George Bush weren't about to pocket-veto it. His objection? According to State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler, the bill would mean "objectionable intrusiveness into executive branch prerogatives and be potentially fatal to our efforts to cooperate with friends and allies." In other words, it would require Mr. Bush to take action in cases where he might prefer not to. In other words, it might actually make the chemical taboo stick. •

Alaska weeds out the weed.

OFF THE POT

By Charles P. Wohlforth

ANCHORAGE

The people who made marijuana legal in Alaska fifteen years ago were still around to see it recriminalized on November 6, but they've changed. They have less hair. Steve Cowper, the outgoing governor, favored the initiative to give ninety-day prison terms to pot smokers; in 1975, as a legislator, he had voted with other young Turks to legalize the weed. Back then the pungent smell of pot sometimes wafted through the halls of the capitol, and Cowper wore his hair like a biker from *Easy Rider*. Now his hair is thinning respectably, and his press secretary politely says the governor would rather not discuss the issue.

The state has changed too. Back when pot was legalized, Alaska was isolated. Television programs arrived on tape at least two weeks late. Now even the East Coast newspapers arrive the same day. With the tighter connection with the rest of the world has come concern about the drug problem, widely cited as the nation's chief worry, even though its worst manifestations, such as crack houses and street violence, are scarce here. The epidemic in Alaska is alcoholism. In native villages alcohol-related accidental death, murder, and suicide are the leading killers.

But most important to the fate of marijuana in Alaska has been the change in the political climate. The Republican Party, once a haven for libertarians and idealistic coffee shop conservatives, was transformed by Reaganism, and then, in 1988, taken over by people who flooded the caucuses to vote for evangelist Pat Robertson for president. The Libertarian Party, which once had several members in the legislature, now has dried up and blown away.

In 1975 the idealism of the left and of the right reached all the way around to meet on the other side. Sixties liberals had taken over the statehouse, a result of Watergate, fears about the then nascent invasion of the oil industry, and a fortuitous redistricting. They wanted to reform everything fast. Legend has it that they smoked marijuana together the night before voting on the legalization bill. But it wouldn't have passed if not for the votes of conservatives in the Senate. They didn't care for the drug culture but had maintained a frontier philosophy that people shouldn't be bothered by the government.

It was John Butrovich's eloquent speech about his memories of Prohibition, and his swing vote, that were ultimately responsible. Born in Alaska in 1910, Butrovich had represented the Republicans of the cold, Interior town of Fairbanks since well before Alaska became a state. He was a member of the territorial legislature when salmon, not oil, was king. "People were calling me at all hours of the damn night," he said recently. "Their kids were in trouble, they were getting picked up. And these weren't kids of the street; they were kids of good people. And I thought, well, hell, as far as a few marijuana cigarettes in the home, I'd rather have that than kids in the clink. . . . And now I look around, and some of these guys are presidents of big corporations. . . . I'd do it again."

The bill reduced the penalty for marijuana possession to a civil fine of up to $100. (Later, the legislature added stiff penalties for selling pot, possession by minors, transporting the stuff, and owning larger amounts.) Ten days after it passed the state Supreme Court went further. Long-haired lawyer Irwin Ravin—he still has a ponytail, but now it's going gray—had gotten himself arrested in 1972 with a few joints to challenge the law. An initiative had just passed adding to the state constitution the words, "The right of the people to privacy is recognized and shall not be abridged." The court ruled that since marijuana didn't seem very harmful, the right to privacy extended to owning small amounts of it at home.

Only a few months after pot became legal, the first initiative to reverse the law was proposed. Support grew in the early '80s, until this year passage was inevitable. In addition to going to jail, possessors of any amount of pot now can be fined up to $1,000. The state Supreme Court would have to overrule the Ravin decision for the new initiative to be upheld. It might do so if it decides the stronger marijuana available today is more of a health risk. If the law stands, Alaska will move

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from having the most liberal marijuana law in the nation—it was the only state to make pot possession of up to four ounces in the home completely legal for adults—to having one of the nation's harsher laws. (Ten states still have no criminal penalty for pot use.)

There wasn't much authentic debate about the initiative. In one of his last forays as drug czar, William Bennett came up from Washington to stump for it, suggesting Alaska would be un-American to vote no and surrender an important front in the president's war on drugs. "It's a question of whether the citizens of Alaska will give their consent to the proposition that drugs are wrong," he said in one appearance. "This is no benign, idle, harmless activity. This is a threat to our children and to our basic beliefs." Fifteen years ago a visit like Bennett's might have backfired. Alaskans used to celebrate their provincialism with the slogan: "We don't give a damn how they do it Outside." When Bennett arrived, pot proponents tried to play on that sense of independence with a radio ad that said, "In 1867, when Alaska was bought from the Russians for $2 an acre, Alaskans no longer had to listen to a distant czar. In 1990, another distant czar wants us to obey him."

But the campaign against the initiative didn't work. Bennett said that avoiding the public health danger of marijuana was worth giving up some personal freedom. Initiative proponents said the law would be a "message to youth," driving home the point until the phrase became like a chant. And since the new law was only meant as a message, enforcement would not be needed and it would cost nothing, candidates for office said. The voters went along.

For some conservatives, the victory was '60s revanchism. State legislator Alyce Hanley, an Anchorage Republican who led the initiative, also led a fight against a plan to name a mountain after Martin Luther King Jr., saying her experience in the 1960s as the wife of an FBI agent in the South taught her that King caused much of the civil rights violence. Fritz Pettyjohn, now retired from the state House, favored naming the mountain, but helped push the initiative. He said that the counterculture he fought against in the '60s has now been thoroughly discredited by AIDS, boat people from Vietnam, and the drug problem. The pot initiative, he said, "is just the last nail in the coffin of '60s radicalism, which we're just finishing nailing down here in Alaska."

Bob Wagstaff, the attorney who won the Ravin case, now wonders if the sentiments of individualism and self-government that pervaded Alaska during the '70s are gone forever. "It could be that that moment of time has passed in Alaska," he said. "That the rugged individuals who, as Chief Justice [Jay] Rabinowitz said in the Ravin decision, came seeking control over their own lifestyles now virtually unattainable in many of our sister states, have been overwhelmed by the people oil brought here, with Bible Belt values from the Texas oil patch."

For a brief time before the vote, the marijuana issue became a stage to play out those changes. It brought Bennett, who complained that all his old tweed jackets still smell of pot, although he was one of "twenty to thirty people" at Harvard who didn't smoke it. "A lot of people turned out all right," he conceded, before telling his audiences about those who didn't. And it brought a graying campaigner for a pro-marijuana group, wearing tie-dyed shirts and distributing Grateful Dead posters on the side, who told audiences to forget reefer madness because "the time for reefer gladness is about to begin." And it motivated an Interior Alaska resident to protest the initiative by bombing the tundra from a small plane with a load of what he said was marijuana. It dispersed quickly over the rugged terrain, and Alaska State Troopers, never sure of what it was, couldn't charge him with anything.

CHARLES P. WOHLFORTH is a reporter for *The Anchorage Daily News*.

The Gulf case, teleprompter-ready.

READ MY SPEECH

By Morton Kondracke

The following is the text of an address not delivered on national television by President Bush:

Fellow citizens, you know that I have ordered nearly 400,000 men and women of the armed forces to duty in Saudi Arabia. They are your sons and daughters, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters. They are enduring heat and hardship. They miss their homes and families. They are uncertain about how long they will be away and about whether they may have to go into combat.

Here at home, many are uncertain about whether this entire undertaking is worthwhile. Their concerns deserve a thoughtful, serious answer from me.

I have no hesitation in assuring you that the United States, along with its allies and the United Nations, is embarked on a vital mission. That mission is not simply to keep Iraq's dictator from dominating the Middle East and its oil supplies, or to protect the world from the barbarism he represents, important as those goals are. It is to seize the extraordinary opportunity that the waning of the cold war has created—the opportunity to bring into being a decent, lawful, and peaceful new world order.

On August 2, without provocation and after denying he would do so, Saddam Hussein ordered Iraqi forces to seize his small neighbor, Kuwait. To prevent further

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SMART GIFT

The nation's hottest journal of politics, ideas and culture, *THE NEW REPUBLIC* makes an enlightening gift.

For someone who shares your quest for intelligent, provocative reading, there's no better way to say "Happy Holidays."

A welcome challenge for curious minds, your gift of *THE NEW REPUBLIC* will compliment your friends . . . and remind them of your thoughtfulness throughout the year.

Your friends will appreciate *THE NEW REPUBLIC* for the same reasons you do. And you'll appreciate our special holiday rates.

SENSATIONAL SAVINGS

for the first gift (or your own renewal)	**Special Holiday Rates!**
for each additional gift—a sensational savings of 35% off the $69.97 basic rate!	

THE NEW REPUBLIC

NAME _____ MY NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____ CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Include my own subscription at special holiday rates: New Renewal

Payment enclosed. Payment enclosed. ($69.97 for the first gift; all additional gifts $44.95 each.)

Bill me later. Attractive gift cards will be sent in your name. NEW gifts begin with 1st January issue. Renewed subscriptions take effect after current subscription expires.

MAIL TO: **THE NEW REPUBLIC P.O. Box 52333 Boulder, CO 80321-2333** 292U9

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aggression, and in cooperation with the government of Saudi Arabia, I ordered deployment of a defensive ground, air, and naval force of 230,000 Americans. As a result, Iraqi military forces have been stopped at the Saudi border. But during the past four months, the Iraqis have committed every form of barbarity inside Kuwait, including rape, murder, the taking of hostages, and looting on an unprecedented scale. Saddam Hussein's army has carted virtually everything of value from Kuwait back to Iraq. A father and mother begged an Iraqi soldier to let them take their two sick children into a hospital he was guarding. Instead, he shot the children, telling the parents he had "cured them." Saddam Hussein is driving every native Kuwaiti out of the country and is repopulating it with Iraqis. This is not simply an invasion or an occupation. It is the annihilation of a whole country.

Saddam Hussein's acts violate every principle of international law and threaten every hope of building a stable, secure world order. Bolstering our military response with a diplomatic one, my administration and I personally have consulted with governments around the world. The United Nations Security Council has voted eleven times to condemn Iraq and to impose economic and military embargoes against it. Regardless of past differences and differing interests, the world community has spoken unanimously and forcefully that Saddam Hussein's act of aggression cannot stand—that he must get out of Kuwait, unconditionally and now. Almost without exception, the nations of the world have shut off their commerce with Iraq. Few products are getting in, and no Iraqi exports are leaving. Fifty-four nations have agreed to contribute economically or militarily to the joint action against Iraq. Twenty-six nations have sent troops or military matériel. The United States has by far the most forces on the ground, but we are joined by 38,000 troops from Saudi Arabia, 20,000 from Egypt, 9,500 from Britain, 5,000 from Syria, and 28,500 from other countries as far distant as Argentina and Australia. The United States is not acting as the world's policeman. We are, if you will, like a sheriff organizing a posse in the name of law and order. We are acting, as we often have before, as the leader of the civilized world.

Why should so many nations stand as one, and risk the lives of their young men and women? "For oil?" it is sometimes asked. Well, yes, partly for oil—but not for the difference between gasoline at $1 a gallon or at $1.50 a gallon. No responsible leader would risk war for that—nor did any, when gas prices quadrupled in the 1970s. However, until adequate alternate sources of energy are developed, oil is the lifeblood of our economy and the world economy. It fuels our engines, our transport, our industries, and our power plants. Our jobs, our prosperity, the very heat in our homes, depend upon it. If allowed to keep Kuwait, Saddam Hussein will control a third of the world's oil reserves. Think about it. Had he not been deterred from going into Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf states, he might have controlled fully half the world's oil reserves. He could still do so, were our resolve to fail, were the United States to abandon the effort to resist him. He would then set the price for oil, perhaps doubling it or tripling it, forcing every country to pay him tribute and destroying the capacity of poor nations to grow, to educate their children, and to feed their populations. This would be the greatest act of theft the world had ever known.

Would he do such a thing? I confess that I underestimated Saddam Hussein and the threat he posed. I thought that it was possible to develop cooperative relations with him. I should have heeded warnings from members of Congress and others about his methods and intentions. Now I know better. Saddam Hussein launched an eight-year war against his neighbor, Iran, over control of a waterway, causing a million deaths on both sides. He is the only ruler since World War I to have used poison gas on a large scale, and he has used it against his own citizens as well as enemy soldiers, killing thousands. He has used Iraq's substantial oil wealth to build up a million-man army, to develop nuclear bombs, chemical and biological weapons, and missile delivery systems, and to finance terrorist groups. We believe he will possess a deliverable nuclear warhead within five years. If allowed to prevail in the current confrontation, Saddam Hussein would use his new oil income to become a malevolent new superpower—just when the world is thirsting for a chance, after a century of war and cold war, to enter a century of peace.

Millions upon millions of people have been killed in wars in this century—wars over territory, over ideology, over power. We will not end every human conflict anytime soon, but the end of the cold war brings us the opportunity to build a new world order based on law, democratic values, and international cooperation. It is unfortunate that the first test of this new world order should be a military confrontation. I pledge that the United States will undertake to broaden the areas of international cooperation. During the coming two years we will propose new international agreements, with inspection and enforcement mechanisms, to limit trade in conventional arms, prevent the spread of missile technology, and tighten existing controls on nuclear proliferation and chemical and biological weapons development. We will redouble our efforts to promote democratic development around the world, including among our Arab allies. We will seek to establish a new international election-monitoring organization available to nations desiring to demonstrate that they are in the process of building democracy. We seek a world order in which all nations can fulfill the potential of their citizens, and in which all nations bear their fair share of responsibility.

But we will not build this world if Saddam Hussein is allowed to retain the fruits of his aggression. Saddam Hussein's aim is to dominate the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, to terrorize its people with weapons of mass destruction, and to topple governments that stand

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in his way, especially those friendly with the United States. If this dictator, this invader, this mass murderer is permitted to defeat the unanimous resolve of the civilized world, how will the world summon its resolve against any other aggressor? Will any Middle Eastern country even consider democracy as a model if this brutal dictatorship is the most powerful regime in the region? If the world cannot cooperate to thwart a recognized evil, what endeavor can it cooperate upon?

In the Gulf the world faces a crucial test of its destiny. Will it be one of solidarity, in which the peoples of the world join together to resist evil and promote our common good? Or will it be one of barbarism and aggression, in which every ruthless dictator feels unconstrained from fulfilling his ambitions, in which weak nations are repeatedly made victims, in which civilized people either become cynical or watch in helpless despair?

I fervently hope that the building of a new world does not have to begin with war. I call upon Saddam Hussein tonight to withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait, to restore its previous government and to pledge adequate funds to rebuild Kuwait, even though he cannot repair all of the damage he has done. I call upon him to agree to reduce his military arsenal to a level consistent with defense of his territory, and to submit his nuclear, chemical, and missile installations to international inspection. If he refuses—and he has refused every appeal up to now—then the world will have no honorable choice but to intensify pressure against him, including military pressure. It was for this purpose that I ordered an additional force of 150,000 Americans to the region on November 8. The United States and its allies shortly will have in place sufficient air, ground, and naval forces to drive Iraq out of Kuwait and to destroy Iraq's power to wage aggressive war. As a contingency, I am submitting to the U.N. Security Council tomorrow an authorization for the use of such force as may be necessary to accomplish these ends. Once the U.N. has acted, I will call Congress into special session to enact an authorization to use American military forces, if necessary, to carry out the policy of the United Nations. If the disparate world community can stand united against ruthless aggression, I am confident that the United States government can as well.

I cannot predict whether war will be necessary. I pledge that it will not be undertaken casually, that Americans will not fight alone, and that every effort will be made to limit allied casualties. But I cannot rule out any military option; if Saddam Hussein uses unconventional weapons, we will respond in kind. I cannot guarantee that young American men and women will not die, along with British soldiers, Saudis, Egyptians, Kuwaitis, and Syrians. We pray that war will not become necessary. But as past generations of Americans fought for liberty, for democracy, and to defeat totalitarianism, so we will fight, if we must, for a world of order under law. God bless you and our forces in the field, and good night. •

ON THE HILL

UNINCUMBERED

By Janet Hook

"The American people are thoroughly disgusted with the Congress," Representative Mickey Edwards said last July. "They are right." Edwards should know. He has been in Congress for fourteen years, is well placed in the House Republican leadership, and is a senior member of the Appropriations Committee. But now he's back, and he's not alone. He's one of 391 House members to be re-elected despite all the warnings about an anti-incumbent upheaval.

Edwards was practicing a dodge that's long been favored on the Hill in election years: dumping on Congress and coming back for more. "Members of Congress run for Congress by running against Congress," the political scientist Richard F. Fenno Jr. wrote back in 1978. "The strategy is ubiquitous, addictive, cost-free, and foolproof." But what was once an ad hoc populist ploy has become a carefully honed campaign tool. For House Republicans, who have been a minority for a generation, it's practically official party strategy. But even Democrats have found their own ways of saying, "The political system is a mess, but I'm not part of it." The prevalence of this doubletalk is one more reason why incumbents—despite all the talk of vulnerability—are so hard to beat. Sometimes they sound just like challengers. What follows is a field guide to the camouflages of incumbency.

The Giant-killer. One popular genre of campaign ad portrays the brave incumbent returning home from battle with the political establishment. These thirty-second spots can turn some of the House's most obscure members into congressional Davids up against institutional Goliaths. Representative Jim Jontz, an Indiana Democrat, has spent his two terms in the House mostly toiling away on constituent service and farm policy, but his ads this year pronounced his effect on Congress as nothing less than seismic. "Jim Jontz has turned Washington upside down," a voice says, as a picture of the Capitol is flipped over.

The Rebel. It's tougher for more senior members to stake out positions as outsiders, but with some imagination, it can be done. Take Minnesota Democrat Gerry Sikorski, an eight-year veteran of the House who's worked his way onto the powerful Energy and Commerce Committee, and pulled in more than $300,000 in PAC contributions in 1988. What's more, he has caught flak for allegations (later dismissed by the Ethics Com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mittee) that he used his staff for personal business. How do you find a rebel's profile in all that? Sikorski whipped out this year's anti-incumbent badge of honor—he voted against the savings and loan bailout—and ran an ad declaring, "When I was elected to Congress, I said I'd shake things up. . . . I fought that Washington nonsense with some good, old-fashioned Minnesota common sense."

Senator Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican first elected in 1984, played on another favorite theme for incumbents—the budget mess. "I haven't voted for one of these lousy budget packages for years, and I won't go for this one," he said in an ad this fall. "I don't care if the president or the congressional leaders twist my arm." Thus obstructionism on the budget, a great source of voter anger against incumbents, is transformed into an argument for returning an incumbent.

The Ascetic. Many members padded their anti-Congress credentials by proclaiming their opposition to last year's congressional pay raise—a painless gesture because the pay raise was approved anyway. Some added piously that they'd donated their raise to charity or a scholarship fund, but a more common ploy was to "vote no and take the dough." Representative Tom Tauke of Iowa got caught in this embarrassing position during his unsuccessful campaign for the Senate, when it was disclosed that he had kept the pay raise he vocally opposed. A January 1990 survey by the Capitol Hill weekly *Roll Call* of the 174 House members who voted against the pay raise could find only thirty-five who had turned it down or given it to charity.

The Artful Dodger. Incumbents of both parties have been intent on finding a scapegoat for the ills of Washington. The search became especially frantic when public outrage exploded over the collapse of the thrift industry—a scandal in which Congress was a willing accomplice. Some congressmen blamed the congressional banking committees. Those on the committees, such as Illinois Democrat Frank Annunzio, had to be more inventive in their blame-avoidance. Annunzio has a long record of supporting the thrift industry, and in 1986 took a contribution of $3,000 from Charles Keating—facts that did not escape the attention of his Republican opponent, who gave him a real run for re-election. Nevertheless, Annunzio managed to reposition himself as the scourge of the thrift scandal: he held hearings to excoriate S&L regulators and executives, demanded an investigation of Neil Bush, and sported a lapel pin that read: "Jail the S&L Crooks."

In the end, virtually the entire United States Senate adopted this ploy, voting 99-1 to give mandatory life sentences to "S&L kingpins." The only one bold enough to dissent and call the proposal a "smoke screen" disguising congressional complicity was Colorado Republican William L. Armstrong. Guess what? He's retiring this year.

JANET HOOK is a senior writer for *Congressional Quarterly.*

AYODHYA POSTCARD

TEMPLE OF DOOM

By Julian Crandall Hollick

Amid the communal violence gripping India, pandit Baba Lal Das is a lone voice of reason. He also happens to be the Hindu head priest of a disputed religious site in the small town of Ayodhya in the state of Uttar Pradesh. "If only they'd left us alone!" he says. "We could have settled this amongst ourselves with the local Muslims."

He's probably right. For well over forty years Hindus and Muslims in Ayodhya had argued—fiercely but peacefully—about the disputed mosque. Hindus claimed that the mosque, erected by Muslims, had desecrated the birthplace of the legendary Hindu god-king Ram, while Muslims insisted that the Hindus' claim was a specious attempt to usurp their place of worship. However, the politicians in Delhi saw the dispute as something they could manipulate to win votes on the national level. They turned a parish pump quarrel into a national conflict, which in November alone claimed fifty dead and more than 100,000 arrested, caused the fall of Prime Minister V. P. Singh, and brought India to the brink of communal war.

Ayodhya is normally a sleepy little backwater of a town, 250 miles southeast of Delhi, on the road to nowhere in particular. I went there last spring to talk to the locals, six months after Hindu nationalist groups laid the foundation stone for their temple within the precincts of the mosque. In ensuing riots in the neighboring state of Bihar, more than 2,000 Muslims were killed. Now the town was virtually deserted except for the army units nervously digging in around the mosque—and the monkeys.

They were everywhere: stealing fruit from the market stalls; perched on the rooftops like army sharpshooters; fighting over territory high above my head as I looked for the disputed shrine. The mosque itself is small and nondescript, blackened by centuries of humidity, at the end of a small lane lined with religious souvenir stalls. I passed by it the first time without realizing that this was *the* mosque, the center of all the controversy.

Normally you'd expect to hear the Muslim Call to Prayer. But inside, the army was allowing a handful of Hindu pilgrims to worship a small image of Ram. Outside the little building, a group of Hindu holy men sat next to the gate, chanting *bhajans*, or religious hymns, to the glory of Ram and his consort Sita.

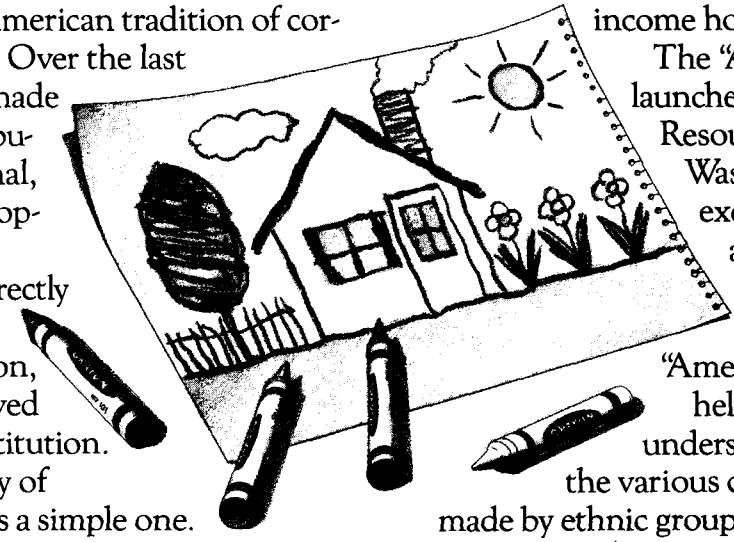
A few yards away was a badly chipped elevated mar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Private Corporation, Public Benefactor

U.S. corporations are renowned as technological innovators. Less well-known is their role as public benefactors. Last year alone, U.S. companies gave more than $5 billion to support the arts, education, community development, and social programs.

Hitachi is honored to participate in this particularly American tradition of corporate generosity. Over the last decade, we have made numerous contributions to educational, community development, and social programs both directly and through The Hitachi Foundation, a company-endowed philanthropic institution.



Our philosophy of corporate giving is a simple one. We believe our contributions should be focused where they will best serve the recipients. That is why we seek out and support programs that address the root causes of drug abuse, homelessness, unemployment, and other ills that beset American communities even in an era of unprecedented prosperity. In this way, we believe, our contributions can have the greatest impact.

The Delaware Valley Community Reinvestment Fund is a perfect example of the kinds of programs we support. This non-profit organization helps low-income and minority families to obtain housing in Philadelphia. Over the next few years, the DVRF will use a five-year, $100,000 loan from The Hitachi Foundation to establish a loan fund. The fund will be used to create low-interest loans for as many as 20 low-income housing borrowers.

The "Americans All" project launched by the Educational Resources Group in Washington, D.C., also exemplifies Hitachi's approach to giving. Through the study of immigration, "Americans All" seeks to help school children understand and appreciate the various contributions made by ethnic groups to American society. A two-year, $120,000 grant from The Hitachi Foundation is supporting a pilot "Americans All" project in San Diego.

Hitachi is proud to contribute to such worthwhile social and educational programs. We believe that they can make a positive contribution to the lives of all Americans.

For more information, write: Hitachi, P.O. Box 7515, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

HITACHI®

© 1990 HITACHI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ble platform, roughly the size of two queen-size beds. Someone had left on it a couple of garlands of marigolds and jasmine, their blossoms limp and faded. This platform is the center of all the trouble. It's said to represent the spot where Ram was born, about 3,000 years ago, when Ayodhya was the capital of a small kingdom. Local Muslims argue that there are more than thirty sites in the town that claim to be the birthplace of Ram. But militant Hindu groups, such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), insist there was a Hindu temple on this site before the Muslim Emperor Babur erected the little mosque in the mid-sixteenth century. There's no proof to back up their claim, but Babur was in the habit of building mosques on holy ground, so it's possible.

In any case, the VHP considers the mosque a desecration that must be torn down. In its place they plan to build a resplendent limestone temple, decorated with gold leaf. Back in Delhi, I was shown artists' renditions of a massive structure that would cover not only the existing mosque but spill over into the surrounding streets.

As long as the British ruled India the quarrel was more or less kept in check. But one morning in 1949, two years after the bloody partition of the country into India and Pakistan, clay images of Ram suddenly appeared inside the mosque. Devout Hindus immediately saw this as a sign from God. Local Muslims and skeptical Hindus saw more mischievous hands at work. There was no apparent violence, but the local courts took over the dispute and the gates to the mosque were locked.

The state of Uttar Pradesh is the heart of the "Cow Belt," fundamentalist Hindu India, and site of the great Hindu epics—the "Mahabharat," the "Ramyana"—and of the sacred Ganges and the God Krishna. But it's also the heartland of Moghul India. Urdu is the second language. Even today there are almost as many Muslims on the streets of Lucknow, the state capital, as there are Hindus. And most villages and small towns contain sizable Muslim populations. By and large they've lived together in peace, except for occasional bloody riots, usually provoked by local politicians for nefarious ends.

In 1986, however, mischief struck again. The VHP petitioned the local magistrate to unlock the mosque. For reasons nobody can really explain, the magistrate ordered the locks removed. The idols of Ram and Sita were rushed back in, and local Hindus effectively took control of the mosque. Baba Lal Das and the Imam of the mosque, Fazul Gafur, talked on and off about a solution. Baba Lal Das offered to pay to rebuild the mosque elsewhere in Ayodhya. Fazul Gafur, fearful of the implications of the precedent nationwide (militant Hindu groups like the VHP claim there are more than 3,000 mosques built on temple sites that should be torn down), suggested separate entrances for Hindus and Muslims so that it could become an ecumenical center of worship. Baba Lal Das says he's still thinking about that proposal.

The question of who owns the site is to be officially decided by the Supreme Court in Delhi. A year ago the VHP signed an agreement with the government of then-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to abide by the court's decision. But Ashok Singhal, secretary-general of the VHP, now blithely maintains the courts have no jurisdiction in this matter. "Courts don't decide if Jesus was born to a Virgin, do they?" he told me. "So they should keep out of this issue!"

The VHP and other Hindu nationalists seized on the dispute as a vehicle for their campaign to rewrite Indian history and "cleanse" the country of all the symbols of 700 years of Muslim influence. The most militant of these groups believe that Hindu India has been "occupied" by Muslims and are waging a war of Hindu liberation against Mahatma Gandhi's vision of a secular India. (Hindu nationalists planned Gandhi's assassination in 1948.)

Indira Gandhi made these groups respectable again in the early 1980s. She needed their votes to shore up her crumbling coalition. Her son Rajiv went down the same path of expediency: a wink and a nod to the Hindu revivalists, turning up for a festival here, talking about Ram Rajya (the kingdom of Ram) there, all the while proclaiming his unswerving belief in a secular India. But it all backfired on Rajiv because militant Hindus voted en masse for their own folks—the Bharatya Janata Party. For almost a year V. P. Singh held on to power thanks to their unofficial support. He believed he could solve the Ayodhya dispute through negotiated compromise, but neither the VHP nor the BJP was prepared to compromise on anything less than the removal of the mosque and construction of the temple.

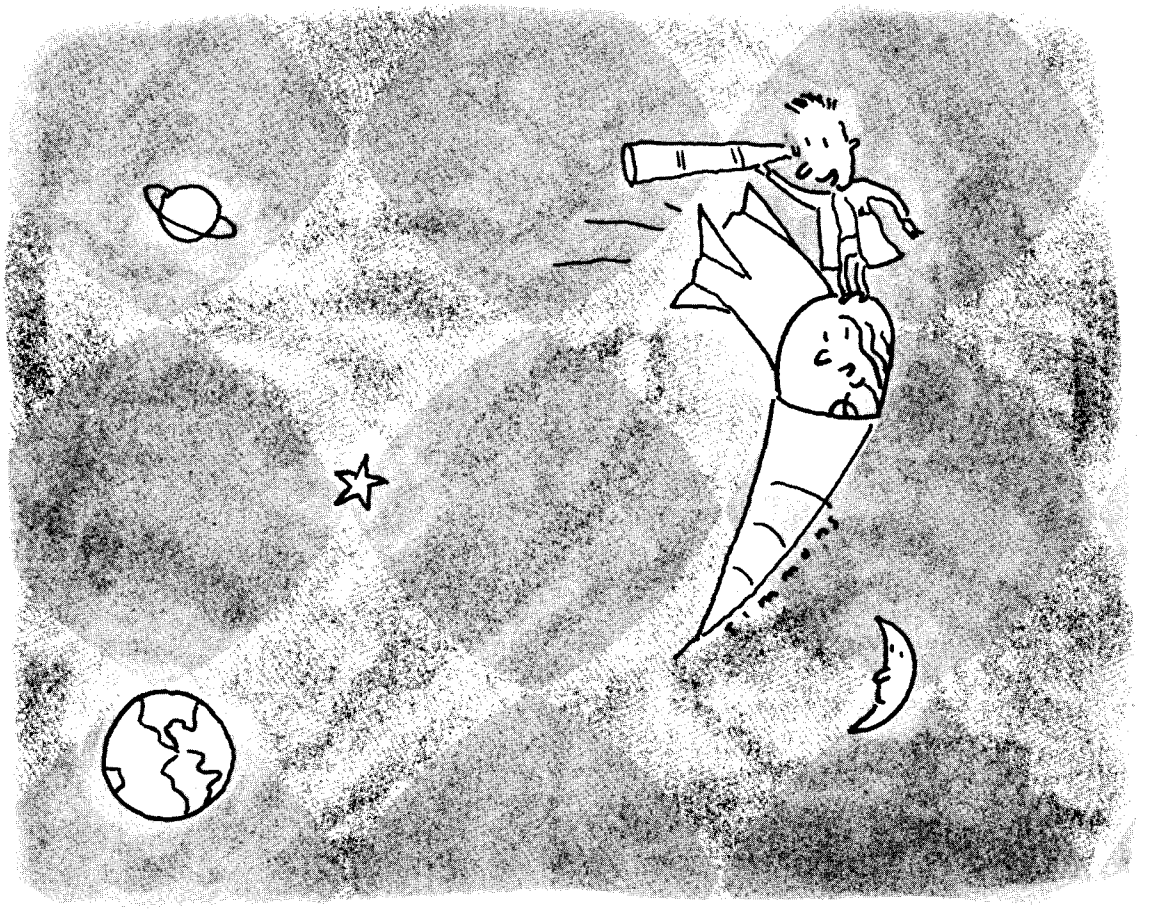
In September Lal Kishen Advani, the leader of the BJP, decided to force the issue, touring the country in a cavalcade to drum up support for the temple. The crowds that turned out for him exceeded all expectations. Perhaps Advani became intoxicated with visions of the BJP sweeping to power on a wave of Hindu revivalism. So he courted arrest and then withdrew BJP support for the coalition government, hoping to precipitate elections that everybody but the BJP fears.

Meanwhile, Baba Lal Das went off to Delhi to plead with President Venkataraman to solve the crisis. The president listened and then issued a decree nationalizing the entire site, presumably with a view to turning it into an ecumenical place of worship. But Muslim militants objected so loudly that Prime Minister Singh hastily canceled the decree and brought about his own downfall.

The fear now is that the genie of communal violence is once again out of the bottle, and this time it may not be possible to put it back in. The terrible madness of 1947, when Hindu killed Muslim and Muslim killed Hindu for no reason other than their religion, has been rekindled, all because nobody would let Baba Lal Das and Fazul Gafur settle a local dispute quietly over a cup of *chai* and a hookah.

JULIAN CRANDALL HOLLICK covers India for National Public Radio.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Consider The News From A Whole New Perspective.

Journey beyond the headlines to a world of news and knowledge on National Public Radio's All Things Considered.

Whether it's a superpower summit or an expedition to the top of Mount Everest . . . we give each story something that's missing from most news broadcasts . . . time.

The time we take makes All Things Considered a different kind of news . . . refreshingly intelligent and insightful . . . with commentary that challenges and ideas that energize.

Take a journey through today's news . . .

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED®

We Think You'll Find The Difference Considerable.

Check local listings for your public radio station or call NPR at (202) 822-2323.

National Public Radio® News

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cancel this Nobel, please.

BOOBY PRIZE

By Robert J. Samuelson

A year ago *The New York Times* awarded me a Nobel Prize in Economics. You can look it up in the October 18, 1989, edition, page D2, under the headline "THE MONEY LINE ON THE NEXT NOBEL." Check it out: "The handful of older economists whom everyone accepts as Nobel-class—Robert Samuelson, Milton Friedman, Kenneth Arrow, James Tobin, Robert Solow—already have their prizes." After this, I almost wrote Paul Samuelson, the renowned economist (and no relation), who was the real recipient: "Dear Professor Samuelson: There seems to have been a mistake. Please send me my money."

But now that I've got my Nobel, I can afford to say the obvious: this award has outlived its usefulness, if it ever had any. Each year it goes to economists whose contributions to human well-being or knowledge are more obscure than the year before. It's always been a pseudo Nobel, created in 1968 by the Bank of Sweden, supposedly to honor Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite. In fact, it merely basks in the reflected glory of the first five prizes for physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and peace, which were created by Nobel and first awarded in 1901. Nobel Prizes are supposed to be given for work that confers "the greatest benefit on mankind," as Nobel put it in his will. The prize for economics flunks this test.

It has often gone for insights that are not exactly dazzling. Herbert Simon of the Carnegie-Mellon University won one in 1978 for his book *Administrative Behavior* (1947), which argued that corporate managers often act like bureaucrats rather than profit-maximizers. Executives "satisfice": that is, crudely balance competing objectives. James Buchanan of George Mason University won his prize in 1986 for observing that politicians often act out of self-interest—to, in the words of the Nobel committee, "obtain as many votes as possible" or "reach positions of power. . . ." And these are among the more interesting awards.

Even when the awards recognize research that has practical significance, the social benefits are often underwhelming. This year's prize went to three U.S. economists for "pioneering" work in finance: Harry Markowitz of the City University of New York, William Sharpe of the Stanford University Business School, and Merton Miller of the Chicago Business School. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Markowitz and Sharpe provided the mathematical foundations for modern "portfolio theory." Essentially, Markowitz corroborated the folklore that investors shouldn't put all their eggs in one basket. He showed mathematically that stock diversification dramatically reduces investors' risk, with only modest reductions in potential profits.

Sharpe devised a system that allows investors to diversify intelligently. He found that stocks that fluctuate more than the overall market (i.e., are riskier) also promise higher average returns. The major contribution was "beta," which shows how much a stock moves in relation to the market. Stocks with a beta of two fluctuate twice as much. They go up (or down) 20 percent when the overall market rises (or falls) 10 percent. Stocks with a beta of 0.5 fluctuate half as much as the market. Get it? Using the Markowitz-Sharpe approach, investors can construct stock portfolios of lesser—or greater—risk, compared with the market. "Trillions of dollars have been invested on the basis of this thinking," says Joseph Grundfest, former commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Big institutional investors (pensions, mutual funds, and insurance companies) use it extensively.

Fine. But by itself, this isn't much of an advance in social well-being. It's not even in the same league as, say, the adoption of seat belts in cars. As long as overall changes in the market are unaffected, using these techniques will merely redistribute gains and losses among investors. In theory, there might be a wider benefit, as Grundfest points out. Giving investors greater control over their risks might spur people to save and invest more. Companies would then have an easier time raising new funds for investments in plants, research and development, and products. But in practice, there's been no sustained increase in the private savings rate. The effect is either nonexistent or too small to matter.

The point is neither to praise nor to damn Markowitz and Sharpe. It is to show that their ideas haven't met Nobel's purpose of bringing great "benefit to mankind." Even so, they are as worthy as many previous recipients. Take this year's other winner, Merton Miller. He was honored mainly for a highly mathematical proof, done with MIT's Franco Modigliani (who received his prize in 1985), on corporate debt-equity financing. The Modigliani-Miller work was based on artificial assumptions about the real world, and had little impact on whether companies raise money by debt (borrowing) or equity (issuing common stock). Put another way, companies would be doing what they're doing if Miller and Modigliani had never lived.

When the Nobel in economics was created, there was a widespread belief that economics had developed into a "science," whose discoveries might systematically improve the human condition. This enthusiasm, a product of the early decades of postwar prosperity, reflected the assumption that modern economic thinking had inspired enlightened government policies. Two decades later the assumption seems dubious. It's true that there's been no recurrence of the Great Depression, and that, on balance, industrial economies seem less

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prone to booms and busts than before World War II. But this improvement may have stemmed more from the end of the rigidly constrictive gold standard than from brilliant economic management. What's incontestable is that many of the ambitious policies promoted by economists in the 1960s and 1970s led to destructive bursts of high inflation.

Probably the only people left who think that economics deserves a Nobel Prize are economists. It confirms their conceit that they're doing "science" rather than the less tidy task of observing the world and trying to make sense of it. This, after all, is done by mere historians, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, and (heaven forbid) even journalists. Economists are loath to admit that they belong in such raffish company.

Prizes such as the Nobel are intended to encourage talented people to go into socially useful pursuits. But we do not need more economists. Indeed, we might all be better off if some of the talented people who have become economists had become something else. Moreover, the award subtly reinforces the narrow-minded tendency of modern economics toward abstraction and mathematical modeling. The economist Donald McCloskey of the University of Iowa has written knowingly of his contemporaries: "Many are bored by history, disdainful of other social sciences, ignorant of their civilization, thoughtless in ethics, and unreflective in method."

The Bank of Sweden could remedy the defects of its bauble in two ways. The first would be to make it a more fitting memorial to Alfred Nobel: give it to people, not necessarily economists, who have improved a nation's—or the world's—economic well-being. Among Americans, why not ennobel former Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker for ending double-digit inflation, Ralph Nader for making corporations more responsive to consumers, or engineer Jack Kilby for co-inventing the integrated circuit? Under this scheme, a few economists might occasionally win for genuinely significant contributions. The late Simon Kuznets, who helped create the national income and product accounts (the statistics that give us the gross national product) received a Nobel in 1971. He would have deserved a prize even under this more demanding standard.

The other approach would be to admit error. Hey, we goofed. Economics is not like chemistry, medicine, or physics. Portfolio theory is nice, but it's not comparable to the discovery of DNA, or even good literature. It's hard for an institution to acknowledge its own mistakes. But I'm doing my part to make the job easier. I hereby renounce my prize, and, along with it, all the glory and prestige it has brought me. The check is in the mail. Or it would be, if the Swedes had ever sent me my money in the first place.

ROBERT J. SAMUELSON, a non-economist, writes a column on economic affairs for *Newsweek* and *The Washington Post*.

A kinder, gentler Gulf strategy.

FORGET KUWAIT

By Robert Wright

During World War II, Vice President (and future TNR editor) Henry Wallace used to imagine the day when world peace would be kept by a United Nations equipped with its own air force. Until recently this seemed like a classic manifestation of woolly-minded one-worldism. But the remarkably global opposition to Saddam Hussein seems to have lent one-worldism new respectability. Lately Washington men-in-suits have been talking soberly about the prospect of U.N.-sanctioned military action in the Middle East. Can F-111s with "U.N." stencilled on them be far behind?

Probably so—at least as far as the actual stencils go. But it's increasingly clear that if President Bush chooses the military route in the Persian Gulf, the soundest strategy would be punitive bombing conducted with U.N. sanction. Along every basic dimension—political, geopolitical, even moral—air strikes against military targets (surgical strikes, as they say) are preferable to an all-out air-and-ground war.

Yet if you raise the subject of surgical strikes in Washington these days, you will be briskly reminded that they would probably fail to get Iraqi troops out of Kuwait. And that's true. But why is it so important to get Iraqi troops out of Kuwait? Leaving aside for the moment the awkward political fact that President Bush has vowed to get them out, what exactly is the larger rationale?

Few people seem eager to touch this question. Even as Senator Sam Nunn led the mid-November Democratic backlash against Bush's Gulf policy, he stressed his commitment to liberating Kuwait; he just wanted to give sanctions more time to work. And the defense analyst Edward Luttwak, the premier advocate of air strikes as a neat and clean alternative to ground war, feels compelled to argue halfheartedly that bombing could "eventually starve out and force the retreat of the occupying Iraqi forces"—which doesn't sound too neat and clean.

To the extent that America's geopolitical aims in the Persian Gulf can be gleaned from administration pronouncements, they are basically twofold: (1) neutralize Iraq's future military threat (including, importantly, its nuclear arms program) and thereby prevent Hussein, or his successor, from acquiring a stranglehold on world oil supplies through further expansion or intimidation; and (2) set a precedent that will

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

preserve peace in the post-cold-war era.

These are indeed worthy, even vital, goals—for America and for the world. But they could be reached at a much lower human cost with a few days of air strikes that didn't liberate Kuwait than with a few months of war that did. In fact, forget about the cost. Surgical strikes are the only strategy that stands a really good chance of achieving both of these geopolitical goals, period. Though either military option could reach the first goal (emasculating Iraq), the second (setting a precedent) is a more delicate matter.

There's been lots of talk about precedent setting, but hardly anyone has mentioned one essential element in any punitive precedent: the punishment must be credibly repeatable. Even if a ground war retakes Kuwait and topples or kills Saddam Hussein, it will serve to discourage future aggressors only if the political costs are low. If they're not—if over months of fighting, as soldiers stream home in body bags, the will of the anti-Iraq alliance weakens, and support among American politicians dissolves into hand-wringing and recrimination—then this whole exercise will add up only to a sterling example of something the world is not willing to do again.

Now consider the bombing option. If allied air power, at minimal cost, severely impairs Iraq's military machine, including its budding nuclear capability, its ballistic missiles, and its chemical weapons (and including Hussein himself, if possible), then the Saddam Hussein school of geopolitics will fall into disrepute among ambitious young autocrats. This lesson will carry special force if the impairment is made lasting through a continuing embargo on arms and high technology, coupled with the continued presence of multinational forces (not necessarily American) in Saudi Arabia. And bear in mind that these sorts of ongoing international checks against Iraqi expansion may be easier to sustain in the wake of surgical strikes than in the wake of a war, which could well fragment the global anti-Iraq alliance.

The bombing option has its problems. Since the 1981 Israeli air strike, Iraq has dispersed and fortified its nuclear research facilities. But this obstacle is at least partly surmountable and, in any event, looms equally large in the generic all-out-war scenario, which confines the ground invasion to Kuwait, leaving bombing as the only way to hit targets inside Iraq.

Two other obvious problems with the bombing option—some hostages will get killed and some Iraqi civilians will get killed—also afflict the standard all-out-war scenario equally (if not more so), and therefore can't be used by war enthusiasts to dismiss the bombing scenario. Still, these are serious issues, and if they're serious enough they should be used to dismiss both military options. So let's look at them.

Dropping American bombs on Iraqi civilians, even aside from moral considerations, is a potentially large public relations problem. But the number of civilian deaths can be kept down by focusing mainly on military targets distant from large population centers. And we can afford to be this selective. The goal is not the utter annihilation of Iraq's military, a feat that, as has been noted, would only revive the specter of Iranian hegemony. The goal is to so diminish Iraq's military that, in the context of ongoing arms sanctions and a fairly modest Gulf security structure, Iraq would remain unthreatening for a long, long time.

As for the hostages: the death of scores or hundreds of civilians is, obviously, a horrible thing. What isn't clear to me is why it's so much more horrible than the death of scores or hundreds (to say nothing of thousands) of soldiers. The American soldiers in the Gulf are men (and women) who signed up for service vaguely aware of the attendant dangers but in most cases never dreaming they'd wind up facing a real live enemy. Certainly the TV recruiting pitch—get a free education, wear a cool-looking helmet, be one of the guys—doesn't play up the dangers. The hostages are for the most part men who went to the Middle East vaguely aware that it's a dicey part of the world, but eager to make money. In short: hostages and soldiers alike took what looked like marginal risks for career reasons. In both cases they miscalculated.

Certainly there's a relevant distinction here, given the consent explicit in the act of enlistment. I just don't see a distinction that justifies a five-to-one or fifty-to-one ratio of soldiers to civilians in the moral calculus, as is commonly assumed in discourse on these matters. Of course, if you are among those who believe that not a single American life should be spent in the Persian Gulf, then these ratios don't matter. But if you're one of the many people who barely even blink when hundreds of soldiers perish but get queasy at the thought that a dozen "innocent" hostages might die for the greater good, then maybe your priorities are due for reweighing. (The idea that corpses carry relatively little moral weight so long as they're in uniform is one of the several great philosophical myths whose main function is to sustain the institution of war. Another is that enemy corpses carry zero weight—as if you or I couldn't just as easily have been born in the shoes of some hapless Iraqi soldier.)

The most glaring deficiency of the bombing option—its likely failure to liberate Kuwait—is, again, not a geopolitical problem. World oil production, with no contribution from Iraq or Kuwait, has already reached its pre-invasion level; and, as we've seen, the routinely cited geopolitical virtues of evicting the Iraqis can be realized through air strikes. Nonetheless, there is a strictly political problem here, given President Bush's famous vow that Iraqi aggression "will not stand." There is also a deeper issue: Isn't it cynically amoral to forsake the Kuwaiti people, who, after all, are the primary victims here? Let's take the issues in reverse order.

If you buy my opening assertion—that bombing would succeed in deterring costly future aggression that would otherwise take place, whereas a ground war,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with its horrific cost and gloomy aftermath, would fail at deterrence—then you agree that *someone* has to sacrifice: either Kuwaitis endure brutality and hardship to save the lives of people elsewhere on the planet at some point in the future, or those future lives get sacrificed for the Kuwaitis. Moreover, even if you don't buy my assertion, you still face a trade-off of suffering: either hundreds of thousands of Kuwaitis lose their homes and/or their freedom (and in a few cases their lives), or thousands, quite possibly tens of thousands, of soldiers lose their lives liberating Kuwait (a process, by the way, that would leave more than a few Kuwaitis dead, not to mention a great many of Iraqis). Either way, somebody suffers. The object of the game is to minimize long-term human suffering. You can call this way of looking at the problem icily utilitarian—which it is—but I don't see how you can call it amoral.

As for the political problem of forsaking Kuwait: it is clear in retrospect that President Bush might have chosen a more flexible line than "this will not stand" (e.g., "Saddam Hussein will rue the day . . ."). But the details of this pledge don't stick in the minds of Americans nearly the way "No new taxes" did (a fact that isn't, I grant you, a tribute to Americans). What Americans want in the Persian Gulf is to vent their indignation toward Hussein—to feel that he's gotten his due and that we've stood up to him. And you'd be surprised how much indignation could be vented via nightly footage of his military behemoth being crushed, especially if he got pinned beneath the rubble.

All Bush would need to do is provide stirring narration. And that shouldn't be hard. Protecting the world against future aggression by Hussein, and against aggression by future Husseins, is a morally sound and perfectly salable goal, and the American people are capable of understanding why all-out war wouldn't serve it. In fact, most Americans are eager to understand that; the adrenaline of early August has long since subsided, and what support for a war Americans are still mouthing would begin to fade once the death toll reached four figures. Bush might then learn the lesson the deficit crisis should have taught him: when you make a stupid promise, it's often best to eat your words early, before they've done their damage.

Of course, the ideal outcome in the Persian Gulf would be none of the above. It would get Iraq out of Kuwait, enduringly neutralize Iraq's military, deter future aggressors, and not entail any more death. In other words: a negotiated withdrawal that left Hussein with no real rewards for his adventurism and brought sturdy institutional checks against further adventurism, including not only a Gulf security structure and arms sanctions but also international inspection of Iraq's arsenal for chemical and nuclear weapons. Sounds pretty unlikely, but who knows? This crisis has already brought many unlikely things to life. So long as there's a reasonable prospect of a truly satisfactory peaceful outcome, and so long as the passage of time isn't eroding our other options, we should stick with the sanctions.

But should President Bush give up on diplomacy and opt for a military solution, he would be well advised to take the one military course that stands a decent chance of preserving broad global support. He should seek Security Council backing for air strikes of well-defined purpose and duration, conditional on Iraq's failure to withdraw from Kuwait by a specified date. The first round of strikes—aimed at nuclear and chemical weapons facilities, ballistic missile sites, and key military bases—needn't preclude a second or third round, a fact that may put Hussein or his successor in the mood to negotiate during intermission. (He would probably surrender all remaining hostages—and maybe something more—in exchange for a no-more-bombs pledge.) But at some point, when the desired damage is done and the Iraqi leadership has hunkered down, further bombing would inflict only gratuitous if not counterproductive pain. All vital goals will have been reached. It will be time to call it a day.

Underlying this whole analysis, of course, is the assumption that a ground war would be long and messy. This is probably a good bet. Certainly several in-the-know people, including Secretary of State James Baker and Desert Shield Commander H. Norman Schwarzkopf, have been suggesting as much. (Schwarzkopf, by the way, also insists that the Iraqi ballistic missile capability—a source of concern immediately before any imminent surgical strike—has been grossly oversold and poses no unmanageable threat to Saudi Arabia.)

But even assuming Baker and Schwarzkopf are wrong, and an all-out war would be fairly short and clean (only, say, 5,000 American deaths), keep in mind the uniqueness of the circumstances that have produced both this huge commitment of American force and the global support for it—namely, an enemy of storybook proportions: a sadistic and megalomaniacal tyrant, a man who has committed genocide against his own people, who apparently once gave his brother-in-law a surprise helicopter crash, and who stands menacingly astride the world's oil supply. Don't expect the next threat to world order, however ultimately dangerous it is, to come in such immediately despicable form. So don't expect that, even if an all-out war goes smoothly, tomorrow's aspiring aggressors will have reason to worry much about any undertaking so costly as a multinational invasion.

But do expect them to worry about simple, relatively cheap surgical strikes, if a precedent exists. As any criminologist will tell you, a painful and probable punishment is a stronger deterrent than a devastating but unlikely one.

Henry Wallace's instincts were right. Air power is the only instrument of military force that is both potent enough and politically cheap enough to be used dependably as an international weapon against aggression. And, under present circumstances, it is the only such instrument that is precise enough to be used conscionably. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Walesa's personal transformation.

LECH-LUSTER

By Victoria Pope

GDANSK

Westerners like to think of Lech Walesa in richly heroic terms. His earthy common sense and political courage epitomized the virtues that helped Poland make its tortuous journey away from communism in the 1980s. He was the shipyard rebel who called the bluff of Soviet bloc authoritarianism; the pious dissident who endured house arrest under Poland's martial law; the authentic proletarian who brokered the 1989 bargaining that led to the first non-Communist government of Eastern Europe since the aftermath of World War II; the Nobel Prize winner who won an ovation from the Congress of the United States when he movingly described Poland's debt to the principles of American democracy.

Here in Poland, however, the Solidarity chief has come to be seen in a somewhat more ambiguous light. In the past year Walesa has been quoted as saying that if Germany destabilizes Europe, it can be "wiped off the map." He answered a question about Jews seeking public office in Poland by saying they should make their ethnic origins known. He has said he would swing a "sharp ax" if elected president, and rule by decree if necessary. Rare indeed are the weeks without apologies and clarifications from Solidarity headquarters in Gdansk. Increasingly people are asking whether this former electrician is qualified to be president of the new republic. Some are saying that Poland's frail democracy may not withstand Walesa's autocratic impulses.

On the surface, a personal change is clear. The wiry shipyard worker who wore boxy polyester suits and ankle-length socks is now a portly 47-year-old who favors well-tailored worsted suits with hand-finished lapels. For campaigning, Walesa wears khakis, white button-down shirts, and a gold chain around his neck. The only vestige of his former attire is the ever-present pin of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, the patron saint of Poland. At the time of the shipyard strike, Walesa didn't even have a car. (He'd gotten rid of his old Warszawa, a classic East bloc clunker.) Not long after the birth of Solidarity came a Volkswagen bus. He now owns a white nine-seater Mercedes micro-bus, large enough to transport him, his eight children, and his wife, Danuta, to their A-frame dacha in the Kazubian forest. But most of the time Walesa uses a Lancia with driver, courtesy of the government of Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

It is tempting to say that fame has spoiled Lech Walesa. When crossed, he is peevish and self-aggrandizing. Last spring, before the campaign got under way, Walesa was in Warsaw for a meeting of the citizens committees to thrash out differences about how to organize politics in Poland. The group was waiting for the arrival of Walesa's old friend and now presidential rival, Mazowiecki. "Buy the prime minister a watch; he was supposed to be here at half past," Walesa snapped. Piqued still when the prime minister arrived, he chided: "You are twenty minutes late." Mazowiecki simply turned his long, drawn face toward heaven.

There are occasions, though, when Walesa displays an infectious, self-deprecating charm. "Were I in the United States I would be putting bulbs into sockets," he told me in one interview, his voice dipping up and down animatedly. "Because there are better politicians there. But here in Poland instead of putting bulbs into sockets I'm doing what I'm doing." He chortled. This is the Walesa who can go to the coal mines or to a farmers' sit-in and defuse anger. It's a gift few Polish politicians possess. "He is the blood and bones of this peasant society," says the writer Ryszard Kapuscinski, not as an endorsement but as a statement of fact.

Walesa grew up on a farm, was educated at trade school, and worked as an electrician at the shipyards. This background gives him a distinct advantage in an election that will be decided by ordinary people. He is an intuitive master of mass opinion, skilled at taking disparate popular sentiments and weaving them into daily pronouncements. For most people in Poland, each day is a struggle to afford basics like meat and toilet paper. Walesa gives voice to anxieties that the government's economic "shock therapy" won't mean a better life anytime soon. During his campaign he called for a kielbasa in every pot, suggesting at one rally that the government stake each Pole 100 million zloties—$10,000—so everyone could buy shares in newly privatized industries. He addresses the problem of apathy and mistrust, declaring he must wage a "political war" because he is in "deadly fear" of a new power monopoly. He urges the routing of Communists still holding posts,

continued on page 24

VICTORIA POPE is a free-lance journalist who writes frequently about Eastern Europe.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Greasy Poles

WARSAW

There is a famous picture from May 1988 of the striking workers walking out of the Gdansk shipyard after they gave up their protest. They have tears in their eyes. They are led by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, then adviser to Solidarity and now prime minister, and Lech Walesa, then and now chairman of the trade union. Two-and-a-half years later, in a presidential election, Poles are about to exercise the real democracy they fought for, and the two main candidates are Mazowiecki and Walesa.

Most Poles have never voted in a presidential election before, and no one has any idea of what the prerogatives of the future head-of-state will be, since these are to be defined by a new constitution. So it is all a bit like the Miss Polonia contest. Over the entire campaign the government provides each contender, six in all, with twenty minutes of TV airtime and forty minutes on radio. The contents of the slots range from mediocre to embarrassing: no good slogans, no quips, a catchy sign-on for Mazowiecki, and a witty use of old footage for Walesa. Besides the free slots, no time was bought (as yet) for any of the candidates. One sees no billboards outside the campaign rallies and hardly any posters for the four minor candidates. None of them has a real chance of winning, but their cumulative votes might keep Walesa or Mazowiecki from getting a majority. That would force a runoff two weeks later, on December 9.

The minor candidates are a fairly colorful lot. On the far right we have Leszek Moczulski, head of the Confederation for Independent Poland, a veteran dissident who might gather the votes of ultranationalist types who dream of a strong, totally self-sufficient Poland. Roman Bartoszcze, of the Polish Peasant Party, appeals to part of the rural population, which is predominantly pro-Walesa. The Mazowiecki government's agricultural policy is widely considered a disaster.

What is left of the far left will probably vote for Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz, a candidate supported by Social-Democracy, as the old Polish United Workers (Communist) party has renamed itself. His plea of "to each according to his needs" is especially popular with those nostalgic for the *dolce vita* of a cozy state office and a comfy Party-supplied dacha.

The independent candidate, Stanislaw Tyminski, couldn't be more independent. Known by his American nickname, "Stan"—he spent the last twenty years making money in Canada—he argues that the presidency should be occupied by a successful businessman. His dark-horse campaign is showing surprising late strength. Tyminski has a slight American accent and a stunning wife from Peru, where he owns a cable TV channel. As well as being Canadian, Stan is a Peruvian citizen, but recently made the disarming declaration that if he wins the presidency he will reside in Poland.

TADEUSZ MAZOWIECKI BY JACEK GAWLOWSKI

All the candidates except the last two can boast of solid records on the prison question. In Poland, of course, the issue is not whether the candidate has granted too many furloughs to jailed criminals; it is whether he himself has put in sufficient time in the clink. Moczulski leads the list with a total of seven years behind bars between 1957 and 1986. Mazowiecki was interned for more than a year after the imposition of martial law in December 1981. Walesa did eleven months, Bartoszcze three.

Warsaw is covered with posters of a smiling Mazowiecki and a serene Walesa. On the campaign trail, they display exactly the opposite qualities. Walesa on the stump is a jolly fellow, a "one of us" kind of guy. His rallies are bigger, noisier, and more numerous than anyone else's. He is strong on negative campaigning—"[Mazowiecki's] banners say: 'It's safer with Mazowiecki.' I ask: Safer to do what? To sink?"—and on low blows. He has said at least five times now that as president he would make Adam Michnik, the editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, a radio announcer. Michnik stutters—get the joke?

Mazowiecki is reticent and shy, his appearances are few, and much of his campaigning is done for him by well-known supporters. He agreed to run only at the very last moment, and only after having sought in vain to reach an agreement with Walesa that both back a neutral candidate. His position as an incumbent of sorts puts him on the defensive, and his main message is, necessarily, "more of the same." If what's needed is a Churchillian call for "blood, toil, tears, and sweat," Mazowiecki is the last person to sell it to the exhausted Poles. He tries to make a virtue of his drawbacks as a campaigner. "I am unable as a candidate for president to behave, on television or elsewhere, as a bride looking for a husband," he says, Dukakis-like. "And I am unable to speak in bad terms of Walesa. I am unwilling to speak badly about a man that was close to me."

Both campaign organizations are notoriously inept—so much so that one Mazowiecki friend jokes that since Walesa's staff is so much bigger, Mazowiecki is sure to win. The opinion polls are no help. *Gazeta* recently published, side by side, the latest surveys of the two most respected polling institutes. One gave Mazowiecki a nine-point lead, the other put him seven points behind Walesa. But one tendency runs through all the polls, and private conversations, too: Mazowiecki is perceived as a better potential president, Walesa as the likely winner. Mazowiecki's handlers worry about the bandwagon effect, fearing that the undecideds (one-fourth of the electorate, with two weeks to go) will go with the putative winner. But then the undecideds might identify with Mazowiecki, notorious for agonizing over decisions. They're cautious? He's cautious, too—their kind of man.

ANNA HUSARSKA

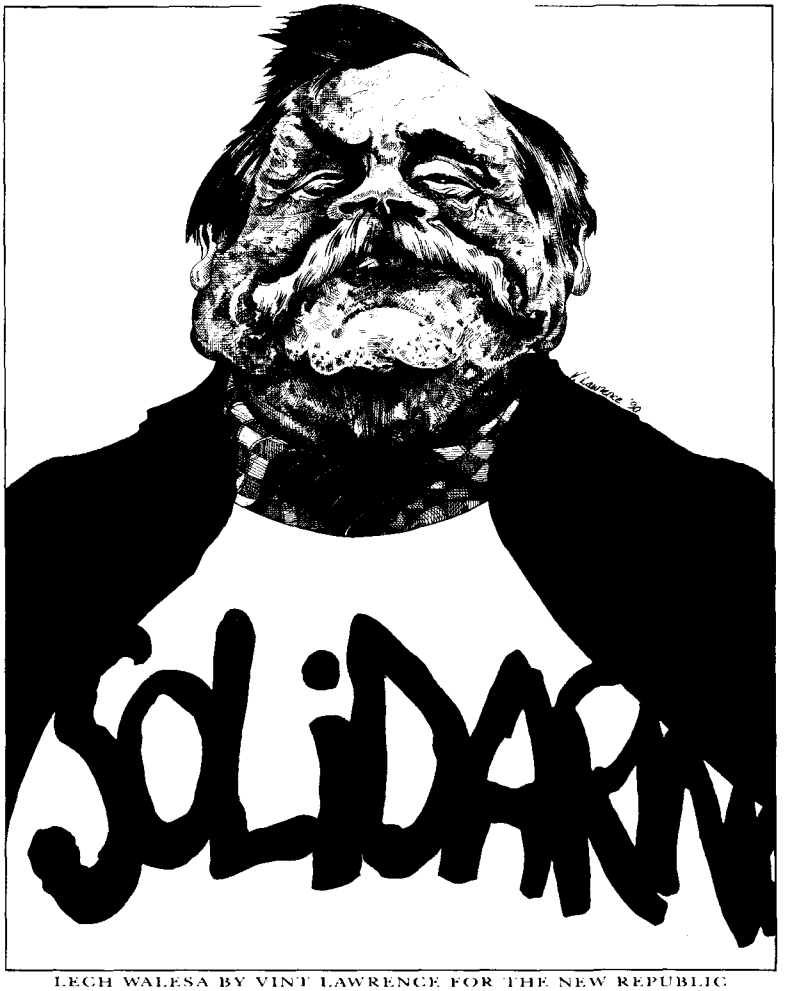
Anna Husarska, a frequent contributor to TNR, is a political reporter for *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and wants Poland's pace of change "accelerated."

Walesa's populism sometimes lapses into demagoguery. He talks cavalierly of shielding workers from the full blow of economic austerity but at the same time pledges support for the free market. With the fervor of a George Wallace he fans the anger of ordinary people against the "*jajo glowy*" (eggheads). In speech after speech Walesa equates himself with the nation—"I am the chief of Poland's reforms." There are also Napoleonic touches, such as the tendency to speak about himself in the third person. ("Lech Walesa is tired, Lech Walesa wants to go home.") Most of Walesa's handlers have given up trying to change him now. "Lech is Lech," is a common, resigned refrain.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that many Polish liberals cringe when they hear Walesa exalt the working class. They accuse him of becoming a kind of Slavic Juan Perón. Walesa hates the allusion to the Argentine dictator, but he defends his position with a line that would have made Perón proud. He says he is simply a spokesman for the people: "I speak what the masses feel. . . . The masses release all their anger through me."



LECH WALESA BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The split between Walesa and the Solidarity liberals began right after the final unraveling of communism in Poland during the summer of 1989. That spring the Round Table negotiations had secured the first semi-democratic elections in the Soviet bloc since the 1940s. The opposition's resounding electoral victory left the Communist Party a shambles. Solidarity, fearing a power vacuum, sought a modus operandi: the Communists would get the presidency; Solidarity, the premiership. Walesa happily played kingmaker, choosing Mazowiecki, his longtime adviser, as prime minister. His other close adviser, Bronislaw Geremek, took a powerful post as chairman of the Citizens' Parliamentary Club, composed of Solidarity deputies. General Wojciech Jaruzelski, who had imposed martial law and temporarily snuffed out Solidarity, became president.

Walesa returned to Gdansk to run the union, but doubtless also expected to play a major role in the new government. Months went by. No invitations from Mazowiecki arrived. By January Walesa was criticizing what he called the government's slow pace of change. Tensions mounted over control of the national citizens committees, first created at election time to back Solidarity candidates. Mazowiecki implored: "Please, don't let us turn this beginning of Polish democracy into hell, the Polish hell of quarrels, rivalries, and fights." But the cross fire continued. At a Vienna conference writer Adam Michnik said Walesa's thinking reminded him of "*ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer.*" Walesa declared his "war at the top," announcing his presidential bid and accusing Mazowiecki of delaying democratization and grasping for power without a popular mandate. "People are forgetting very fast," he said in an interview. "I was the one who crafted Solidarity. Now Mazowiecki and Geremek want me to lose my influence. It is a swindle—pure and simple."

Walesa was not the only one with grievances. Although many Solidarity luminaries made it to the top echelons of government, others from the union hierarchy, especially provincial operatives and Walesa loyalists in Gdansk, sat on the sidelines. Walesa reasserted his power by appointing an ally, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, as the editor of the Solidarity weekly. The paper's top editors resigned in protest, calling the decision undemocratic. But Kaczynski says, "The real reason [they didn't want me] was that I wasn't from the right circles."

"The right circles" means, of course, the opposition elite of Warsaw and Krakow—the actors, writers, journalists, and academics, uniformly multilingual and urbane, who became Solidarity's brain trust. It may seem odd that Kaczynski, a law professor at Warsaw University and veteran opposition figure, should feel like an outcast. But his attitude reflects a common mood. With the loss of the Communist enemy as a unifying force, many of the old fault lines in Polish society are reappearing. City people complain about the peasants, who,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they claim, cry poverty but make profits selling hoarded goods when shortages drive up prices. Provincial Poland thinks Warsaw and Krakow have too much power. Many salaried Poles are nettled by the new moneyed class of entrepreneurs. An old enemy, the Jew, has been revived even though the Jewish population in Poland today is almost nonexistent. An incident at a steel mill rally for Walesa shows how volatile the problem has become. Young anarchists arrived shouting, "Down with Walesa," and workers defending their candidate beat up the protesters. A year ago the two groups would have shouted in unison: "Down with *Komuna*," the slang for communism.

By the end of the summer of 1990 two distinct political groups had emerged: Center Alliance, a right-center political coalition, and the pro-government Civic Movement for Democratic Action, which has been given an English acronym—ROAD—by its founders. Wladyslaw Frasyniuk, one leader, said at a founding meeting: "As our name indicates, we are neither left nor right, but a ROAD to Europe." The acronym has sparked grousing that the group is elitist: many Poles facetiously call them "*drogowcy*": road maintenance workers. Center Alliance was formed in the spring of 1990; its aim was to get Walesa elected president. It says it wants a modern, Western market economy in Poland. Center Alliance also wants a quick purge of the old nomenklatura, many ex-members of which have held on to their old jobs. ROAD is equally committed to the idea of a free market, but is less aggressive in its pursuit of remnants of the old regime. ROADers admit there's still a problem with corruption but are leery of hefty retribution against the old Party hacks, fearing political instability.

The two parties are also distinguished by their rhetoric. Kaczynski, a leader of Center Alliance, sees his opponents as "hypocritical about tradition" because they prefer the "expression 'society' to 'nation.' " Quite often, he says, "They put in opposition Poland and Europe: Poland is backward and xenophobic; and Europe is everything positive, modern, and so on. This left formation has fears about the traditional folk peasant way of believing and the traditional religious way of behaving. We have no such fear." ROAD, in turn, warns against the "empty populism" of Center Alliance. Zbigniew Bujak, a founder of ROAD and a former Solidarity leader, says the Center Alliance is a magnet for nationalists. "Because of this nationalistic point of view, they aren't able to build a political movement that connects Poland to the West. ROAD will be the party which brings Poland to Europe."

The ranks of ROAD are filled with erstwhile Walesites. In fact, many of the intellectuals now criticizing Walesa were once eager to be his teacher. In the first heady months of Solidarity, professors named their babies Lech. Today some of the same people talk of emigrating if Walesa becomes president. When they worry about the future shape of Poland, they allude to *ciemnogrod*, a term used in Poland since the nineteenth century meaning "city of darkness," a place where backwardness and superstition reign. Many Poles are already alarmed by recent decisions to reintroduce religion in the classroom and to limit women's access to abortion. (An outright ban on abortion is now before Poland's Parliament.) At best, they see Walesa as a sort of latter-day Chauncey Gardiner, the sweet idiot-hero of Jerzy Kosinski's *Being There*, whose pronouncements sound refreshingly wise but are actually perfectly empty. There is a barely disguised subtext to this: the Czechs have the enlightened Havel, the Hungarians the sophisticated Antall; and we have—well, an electrician.

As election day gets closer, the debate centers more and more on Walesa. At Solidarity headquarters in Gdansk, more than a hundred letters pour in for him each day. When the journalist Andrzej Wroblewski spoke out against Walesa on his television talk show, he got an avalanche of mail, for and against. A schoolteacher complained: "Why do you mock the nation—meaning Walesa, who is the nation?" A viewer from western Poland wrote: "Those pushing Walesa's candidacy must have lost their minds. A man with two years of electrician's school." Another fulminated: "Mr. Wroblewski, you are either a Jew or a hypocrite. To say something straight you'd have to be a great man like Walesa. We have enough of our own people and we don't need Jews to govern us."

Walesa has publicly dissociated himself from ethnic slurs. But asked if he thought ROAD was a Jewish party, Walesa replied that Jews shouldn't conceal their roots. "I want to clear this up anew, so that there would be no anti-Jewish graffiti," he said. "Jews are great patriots, have done a lot for culture. But when they hide their nationality, they provoke attitudes of anti-Semitism. Why are Jews not proud of the fact that they are Jewish? I am proud of the fact that I am Polish. . . . We extricated ourselves from communism, which treated anti-Semitism as a tool. One should speak about this in order to eliminate this." Walesa says he is shocked by the uproar that followed. He recalls his role in successfully nominating the Israeli writer and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel for the Nobel Peace Prize, and notes that he accompanied Wiesel on an emotional visit to Auschwitz.

But Walesa isn't prone to make painstaking rebuttals. "I don't wish for anyone to write that I am a populist or an anti-Semite," he instructed journalists recently. This bombast is not simply a personal idiosyncrasy. It recalls old themes in Polish history. Some have even compared Walesa's style to that of Josef Pilsudski, Poland's leader between the two world wars, and the comparison is too close to dismiss entirely. General Pilsudski too was a Polish hero of sorts who identified with the spirit of the country. He led his country to independence and at first encouraged democracy. After stepping down from power, however, he launched a coup d'état and presided over a "directed democracy," stopping just short of dictatorship. Walesa has two bronzes of Pilsudski, one at the office and one at home. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Grown-ups and Others

How do directors direct children? It's a mystery. It used to be a necessity. The screen was once chockablock with child stars, and aside from cute face-makers like Shirley Temple, it was always amazing to see the shades of feeling, the sheer verity, of much that children could do. Mickey Rooney's Andy Hardy in that series, Roddy McDowall's Huw in *How Green Was My Valley*, were the high points of their careers. In neither case, nor in many others, was it a matter of sheer precocity. Directors helped those youngsters to nearly incredible subtleties.

Child stars are gone. Most of the good juvenile performances we now see are by children whom we rarely see again. But this only makes the directorial question more pressing because there is nothing cumulative in the child's work. One clue. I once asked a well-known director, who had just made a film that contained moving performances by children, how he did it. "Simple," he answered brutally. "I betrayed them." By which he meant that he won their friendship, got their utter trust and evoked their innermost privacies, knowing all the while that after six weeks or so, he would be on his way.

If betrayal is the secret, the French have been masters of it. Duvivier's *Poil de Carotte*, Benoit-Levy's *La Maternelle*, Clement's *Forbidden Games* are only some of the earlier French gems with extraordinary children. In recent times the master of children's performances was (justly) taken to be Truffaut. Not far below him is Diane Kurys, whose previous films *Peppermint Soda* and *Entre Nous* showed a particular gift in this regard. Her latest, **C'est la Vie** (Samuel Goldwyn) is, as far as the child actors are concerned, even more delicate.

It's not a mere matter of understanding children. Kurys could understand children better than any child psychologist alive and still not produce such a film. She understands how to make children *act*. A child may have the requisite experience for a scene about a child; but how does a director convert a child's generalized instinct for make-believe into a finely honed, responsive performance? How does a child learn to use, not merely to reproduce, experience? It's a mystery.

But it's a mystery that Kurys has solved. *C'est la Vie* is about a French family's summer at a beach. Never mind the huge emotional moments: one of the picture's high points is when a four-year-old boy, who has spent the summer trying to tie his shoelaces, finally does it. Go direct *that*, Michelangelo Antonioni!

The summer is 1958. Nathalie Baye plays a woman who has separated from her husband and goes to a beach resort for the summer with her two daughters, aged about 13 and 8. The adult action in the film consists of Baye's affair with a young man, his departure, her husband's arrival in an attempt to reconciliate, his discovery of the affair, a savage quarrel. Later the husband still attempts to mend the marriage. Baye declines.

The counterpoint to these matters is the summer of the daughters with their cousins—children of Baye's sister and brother-in-law who have the house next door. All the children go through a familiar range of adventures and caprices, from stupid pranks to a first kiss, from surprising perceptions to nerve-wearing silliness.

Neither the adults' story nor the children's story is novel. But Baye, her husband (Richard Berry), the other couple (Zabou and Jean-Pierre Bacri) give performances that aim at making us care about the people, not about novelty of plot. In this they match the children. (Baye's daughters are Julie Bataille and Candice Lefranc.) It's as if Kurys had persuaded the adults to act like grown-up children, to perform with the same candor and gravity, the same always imminent laughter.

In atmospherics—the climate of marital breakup in the presence of children—*C'est la Vie* has some relation to *Entre Nous*, which was set six years earlier. But the new film is no kind of sequel. The last words of the earlier picture told us that, after the wife chose life with another woman, the husband left, never to return.

However, Kurys has become a cinematic connoisseur of family transitions, an ambience of troubled sexuality in adults juxtaposed with the opening of sexual realms in children. Beyond these specifics, her directing in general has become wonderfully secure—swift in movement, acute in rhythm, precise in

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Life and Nothing But. *After the First World War, a French army unit searches for and identifies missing soldiers. Bertrand Tavernier's screenplay is inconclusive, but generally his writing and directing are in the tradition of Jean Renoir. (Reviewed 10/15/90)* **The Nasty Girl.** *A young Bavarian woman digs into her town's Nazi past and upsets almost everyone. Michael Verhoeven directs cleverly, though his light touch somewhat mutes the bitterness of the picture. (11/26/90)* **Postcards from the Edge.** *There's always room for good glitz. Meryl Streep and Shirley MacLaine as Hollywood daughter and mother in an entertaining comedy-drama. (10/8/90)* **Reversal of Fortune.** *The von Bülow case. Some of the legal stuff seems trite (though it's true), some of the scenes are flaky; but Barbet Schroeder directs with sizzle, Ron Silver as Alan Dershowitz ferrets fiercely, and Jeremy Irons as Claus von Bülow sweeps all before him. (11/19/90)* —**SK**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

points of view. *C'est la Vie* is hardly earth-shaking; but we're almost grateful that it's not because it's so engaging.

My Twentieth Century (Aries) is much more novel and much less engaging. It's a first feature, in black and white, written and directed by a Hungarian woman, Ildikó Enyedi, and is full of tricks, whimsy, and lame playfulness. Films that gambol (and gamble) with convention are always welcome initially, in the cookie-cutter world of most pictures, but *My Twentieth Century* quickly wears out its welcome with its vanity about its gamboling and its complete lack of point, thematic or otherwise.

This Hungarian film begins in Menlo Park, New Jersey, in 1880 with a celebration of Edison's invention of the electric light. (History is only a trampoline for Enyedi to caper on.) The central story starts in Budapest where twin girls are born at the time of the Edison event. These two—played by the same actress when they mature—are separated when they are about 12 and live quite different lives, one as a high-class courtesan, the other as a revolutionary.

Nothing is handled straightforwardly. There are excursions, interjections, leaps in time and in geography. I kept being reminded of a Czech film about two young women, Věra Chytilová's *Daisies*, equally mannered and equally pointless.

If Chytilová influences Enyedi, Bresson and Welles were also tapped. A patient donkey ambles in at a couple of key moments, right out of *Au Hasard, Balthazar*; a closing scene takes place in a crazy house of mirrors, reflecting *The Lady from Shanghai*. Enyedi even connects the two elements: the donkey wanders into the crazy house.

All this carrying-on tells us little about the arrival of this century or about its impact on the two young women. It doesn't even expand the boundaries of cinematic razzle-dazzle. •

The long and extraordinary career of Sidney Hook.

The Man Who Knew Too Much

BY JOHN PATRICK DIGGINS

I.

In 1940 politics and philosophy came diabolically together. The world of action seemed to require the work of reflection to an unusual degree. It was the year of Dunkirk, and the fall of France; and Hitler was deliberating his decision to give up the Battle of Britain and turn against the Soviet Union. In this year in which the destiny of the Western world hung on the clash between the ideologies of communism, fascism, and liberalism, two books appeared in the United States, Sidney Hook's *Reason, Social Myths, and Democracy* and Herbert Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution*. Hook dedicated his book "To the Memory of a Great Adversary" (he was referring to Leon Trotsky). Marcuse dedicated his book "To Max Horkheimer and the Institute for Social Research." The dedications marked respectively the death of the Old Left and the unanticipated birth of the New Left (two decades later, to be sure, under the banner of "critical theory"); and eventually Marcuse's influence would relegate Hook to the margins of American philosophy, not least because the New Left preferred to denounce Hook than to read him.

JOHN PATRICK DIGGINS is Distinguished Professor of History at the Graduate School, CUNY, and author of two forthcoming books, *The Rise and Fall of the American Left* (W. W. Norton) and *The Promise of Pragmatism*.

Convictions
by Sidney Hook
(Prometheus Books, 310 pp., $24.95)

Long before Trotsky's assassination that same year, several leading Old Left intellectuals had turned away from communism and its philosophical foundations in Marxism. A doctrine that had promised to predict events had scarcely explained them. The unexpected durability of the Third Reich, which was supposed to collapse upon Hitler's advent to power; the even more stunning nonaggression pact between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia; the nauseating helplessness with which writers watched the outbreak of the Second World War—

The Culture We Deserve
JACQUES BARZUN
Essays on current culture from one of America's most brilliant and delightfully readable intellectuals. "Every page is a provocation to thought . . . Reading [it] is an encouragement for those willing and able to address the more troubling questions of our time."
—JOHN SIMON, *American Spectator*
Wesleyan. Now in paper, $13.95

Acts of Recovery
Essays on Culture and Politics
JEFFREY HART
"Hart is today America's finest practitioner of the high journalism that takes seriously and makes intelligible the intersection of politics and culture."
—GEORGE F. WILL
$19.95

The American Kaleidoscope
Race, Ethnicity, and the Civic Culture
LAWRENCE FUCHS
A leading authority's panoramic history of immigrant-ethnic groups and the national political culture. "Fuchs dares to ask and answer vexing and controversial questions about immigration, affirmative action, and language policy. [This is] most important and provocative reading for any person interested in the unique qualities of the American experiment."
—ALAN SIMPSON
Wesleyan. $45.00

The Leader, the Led, and the Psyche
BRUCE MAZLISH
A pathbreaking look at intellectual and political leaders, from Darwin and Freud to Khomeini and Nixon. "This is the best of Bruce Mazlish—provocative, insightful, a bit iconoclastic, he thinks and writes on the frontiers of his disciplines."—JAMES MacGREGOR BURNS
Wesleyan. $29.95

The Frontier of Loyalty
Political Exiles in the Nation-State
YOSSI SHAIN
A comprehensive look at 20th century political exiles. "Sophisticated, learned, and sensible."—MICHAEL R. MARRUS
Wesleyan. Now in paper, $12.95

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF NEW ENGLAND
Including
WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY PRESS
Hanover, NH 03755 • 800-421-1561

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all these events humbled the intellect, particularly the Marxian intellect, in its ambition to comprehend the meaning of history.

A reader of *Reason and Revolution*, however, could have looked upon these very events as evidence that history realizes itself through the dissolution and the destruction of its immediate forms. Marcuse's reader could have seen, in grisly 1940, "Spirit" struggling toward freedom. Marcuse, of course, wrote his book not to interpret events, but to rescue Hegel from the Nazis. Still, the appearance of Hook's collection of essays could not have been more timely. For Hook aimed to interrogate precisely what Marcuse sought to validate: the philosophy of the dialectic.

According to Marcuse, the most important aspect of Hegel's philosophy is the principle of "negation," the conviction that that which exists cannot be true because "Reason" discovers a distinction between appearance and reality, and reveals the struggle of things to be what they are by overcoming what they were; reality is permeated with contradictions between the actual and the potential, and the dialectic, which brings the potential out of the actual, inheres in the actual movement of things, and moves them along. It was precisely this way of thinking that Hook challenged. He exposed the imprecise metaphors and the indeterminate references latent in the dialectical language. The Marxists failed to see, according to Hook, that the concept of contradiction is a philosophical and linguistic construction, and thus is present not in things and processes of nature, but in human judgments and statements. Under Hook's withering logic, Engels's (and Marcuse's) vocabulary of "negation" in the service of freedom was shown to be rhetoric doing the work of reason.

One might have thought that Hook's learned explorations of Marxism would have won some appreciation in America and more thoroughly influenced the intellectual scene. Not a chance. American liberals rarely interested themselves in Marxian ideas, and so they did not interest themselves in the rebuttal of those ideas. American radicals shunned Hook for much the same reason that Stalinists feared Trotsky: he was the man who knew too much. Future generations of intellectuals were so reluctant to acknowledge a formidable adversary that when *The Dictionary of Marxist Thought* was published in 1983, edited by Tom Bottomore, a well-known sociologist and scholar of Marxism, Hook's name did not appear in it.

American intellectual life will not be the same without Hook, who died two years ago at the age of 86. He provoked more controversy, assumed more unpopular positions, lost more friends, and won more new admirers than any other member of "the New York intellectuals." "If two people agree," Hook once told a young scholar from the People's Republic of China, "one of them is not a philosopher." The disagreer may also become a polemicist, of course, and Hook was one of the most gifted polemicists of his age. The image of intellectual pugnacity stuck to him all his life, and probably went as far back as his Brooklyn school days, when his teachers, particularly the boring ones, regarded the small, bespectacled Jewish pupil as a troublemaker who asked too many questions. Hook seemed to have been born for disputation, and he could seldom resist the urge to annihilate his opponents, whose errors were usually "not only wrong but demonstrably wrong." A raging rationalist, scrappy, aggressive, and witty, he was the Jake LaMotta of American philosophy, who went the rounds with the best of them (Trotsky, Russell, Einstein) and was never knocked out.

II.

In some academic circles, where many people remain '60s-struck, the mention of Sidney Hook's name provokes more snarls than smiles. He is regarded as a renegade from radicalism, whose cold war anti-communism bore some of the responsibility for McCarthyism and the erosion of civil liberties, the Vietnam War, and the rise of neoconservatism. This view of Hook deserves a closer look, for it is sorely lacking in historical accuracy.

The McCarthyite right of the 1950s claimed that the American intellectual was too soft on communism; the New Left of the 1960s charged Hook and his allies with being too hard on communism. The notion that Hook and the New York intellectuals were trying to "outdo the right in its anti-Communist zeal" (in the words of Christopher Lasch) is historically imprecise. For there was no significant anti-Communist right in America during and immediately after the Second World War, the period in which Hook and his generation, writing in *Partisan Review*, *The New Leader*, and *politics*, took a stand against Stalinism. It would be more correct to say that Hook and others were trying to save the left from its pro-Communist zeal.

This was certainly the case in the Progressive campaign in 1948, and at the Waldorf Conference in 1949. The formation of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, which Hook helped to organize (he served as its first chairman), was a direct response not to Joe McCarthy, but to Soviet sympathizers such as Lillian Hellman and Paul Robeson, who had been participating in pro-Stalinist, anti-American cultural festivals in Europe. Hook's own offensive against Stalinist Russia went as far back as the 1930s, when he organized the Trotsky "countertrial" in Mexico, only to discover that its verdict of innocence scarcely mattered in a world of power politics, in which truth was to be sacrificed for the duration of the Popular Front. When he was not allowed to speak at the Waldorf Conference, Hook demanded of the Soviet government precisely what the New Left would demand of the American government: freedom of information.

In 1953 Hook published a letter in *The New York Times* calling for Senator McCarthy's retirement. He always felt that McCarthyism, like the various un-American activities committees, did more to obfuscate the Communist issue than to address it. But how, then, to address it? In higher education, Hook sought to disentangle the question of anti-communism by confining the intellectual issue to the campus, where it would be addressed by the faculty on the basis of "professional ethics." In *Heresy, Yes—Conspiracy, No* and *Common Sense and the Fifth Amendment*, Hook opposed loyalty oaths and upheld the right of Communists to teach, provided that the CP faculty member agreed to answer questions put forth by his or her academic peers. America thrives on open intellectual heresy, Hook insisted, but America must oppose covert political conspiracy. Hook was fond of quoting Woodrow Wilson: "If there is nothing to conceal, why conceal it?"

During the Vietnam War, Hook became a symbol of everything that the New Left detested: the "establishment" intellectual who had organized the CIA-financed ACCF; the cold warrior who opposed disarmament, the peace movement, and Russell's "Better Red than Dead" stance; the ex-Communist who refused to see that Stalinism was only his generation's hang-up and that the new revolutionary socialism in the Third World would show the gentler heart of "Marxist humanism." Hook believed that America's involvement in the war was mistaken; but once involved, he said, it would be an even greater mistake to withdraw before North Vietnam recognized South Vietnam's independence. This was, surely,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a strange position for a pragmatist, for a teacher of a philosophy that proposes to test ideas in practice and prefers to admit the failure of an "experiment" than to stay a course regardless of the consequences.

The outcome of the Vietnam War proved both the right and the left wrong. Conservatives insisted that what was happening in Vietnam in the 1960s had a precedent in Eastern Europe in the 1940s: the absorption of independent nation-states by the Communist monolith. After the war, however, the "dominoes" did not fall, they fought each other; the war was followed not by a global realignment, but by a regional bloodbath. Hook's obsession with communism in the 1960s had more to do with the illusions of the left than the fears of the right. He could not countenance the New Left's conviction that freedom, equality, and justice—what Tom Hayden called "rice-roots democracy"—would spring to life from the Viet Cong's struggle against imperialism. The illusions of revolutionary idealism outraged Hook, possibly because he remembered them from the early 1930s.

In his autobiography, *Out of Step* (1987), Hook did grudgingly praise one aspect of the counterculture: its forthrightness about its political views and programs contrasted favorably with the "mealy-mouthed" behavior of those who took the Fifth. But Hook also asked for integrity and consistency, and with the radicalization of the campus he saw little of either. In *Academic Freedom and Academic Anarchy* (1970), he protested the politicization of teaching and scholarship, the disruption of classes, and the harassment of professors, many of whom let Hook down by fearing to take unpopular positions against student activists. In the last years of his life, he founded the University Center for Rational Alternatives, to organize faculty concerned about defending the academy against those whom he called the "barbarians." His last political fight, carried right up until the end, involved a controversy at Stanford over the teaching of the classics of Western civilization; race, sex, and class—some of the very distinctions that the Marxists had promised would disappear—were reappearing on the American campus, and they were being celebrated as instruments of intellectual liberation.

Still, Hook's combativeness at the conservative Hoover Institution, and his collaboration with the neoconservatives, is not the whole story of his last years. In the company of the neocons, Hook continued to defend many causes of the left: progressive taxation, the rights of labor, the welfare state, freedom of choice in respect to abortion, and euthanasia as the final moral act, "the ethics of suicide." And he continued to challenge many of the platitudes that still surround God, Capitalism, and Truth, the three idols of conservatism in America.

III.

The polemicist and the activist represented only the irrepressible side of Hook's mind and temperament. His love of rational argument reflected a deeper commitment to philosophy and the life of the mind. With the passing of the cold war, Hook's anti-Communist arguments, the work for which he gained his notoriety, will no longer command attention, but his philosophical writings will remain central to American intellectual history. They must not be buried beneath the magnificent weight of his disputations.

Hook's first book, *The Metaphysics of Pragmatism* (1927), was a doctoral dissertation written for John Dewey at Columbia University. Its misleading title was selected "with malice prepense," Hook confessed, since metaphysics and pragmatism were generally regarded as mutually exclusive. In an introductory note, Dewey praised his young student for approaching philosophy historically, in order to appreciate ideas evolving from the world that is to be explored, as opposed to ideas that purport to represent or picture the world as it really, essentially, is—for proceeding a little like the way that poststructuralists and postmodernists proceed today.

Hook argued that a philosophy devoted to method need not be devoid of meaning in relation to existence. Defining metaphysics as "an account of the generic traits of existence," Hook accounted for the mind pragmatically, as an organism responding to environmental conditions and circumstances. He rejected the legacy of Kantian idealism, a pre-evolutionary stance that holds the mind as its own object of knowledge that creates the world according to its own categories. For Hook, knowledge derives from the interaction of thought with the behavior of things; it must have reference to events and cannot be deduced independently of existence.

Hook challenged Kant's conviction that metaphysical categories are prescribed by the mind. Conceiving thought as a "tool," and man as "homo faber" working on the materials of existence,

MAKING ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Inclusion, Exclusion, and American Law

MARTHA MINOW

"Martha Minow shows clearly and convincingly how differences—whether of race, sex, ability, religion or ethnicity—are transformed when they are not viewed solely from the perspective of the dominant group. A sensitive and carefully nuanced argument about how the law should take account of difference."

—*Susan Moller Okin, Brandeis University*

Minow confronts a variety of dilemmas of difference resulting from contradictory legal strategies—strategies that attempt to correct inequalities by sometimes recognizing and sometimes ignoring differences—and she argues, in effect, for a reconstructed jurisprudence based on the ability to recognize and work with perceptible forms of difference. $29.95

At bookstores, or from—

Cornell University Press

124 Roberts Place
Ithaca, NY 14850

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pragmatic philosophy became, in Hook's formulation of it, a mode of inquiry in which thought and its sense impressions "must be interpreted as checks and signs of what things are said or taken to be," verifiable procedures by which things are experienced rather than "revelations of what they intrinsically are." Metaphysically, the world is unknowable as some immutable essence. Pragmatically, it is knowable as the contingent stimuli that the mind encounters and ultimately aims to control.

It could be said that Hook redefined metaphysics—which traditionally denoted a realm "beyond" the scope of physics, or an aspiration to otherworldliness, or a participation in the universal and the eternal—to give pragmatism a modest metaphysical dimension without claiming more than science could deliver. Yet this learned defense of pragmatism fell short of satisfying those who were not already convinced of pragmatism's validity; and Hook's defense of Dewey's ethical theory, his insistence that scientific intelligence could be brought to bear so that the "desired" could, after critical reflection on the consequences of anticipated action, be translated into the "desirable," and educated citizens could know what "ought" to be done, drew a pointed retort from Morton White, who observed that descriptive statements cannot be transformed into normative judgments without the intervention of some ethical obligation.

SIDNEY HOOK BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It is interesting to note that Hook's book appeared the same year as Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*. The comparison is telling about the two philosophical cultures. The German philosopher had also taken what might be called "the pragmatic turn." He, too, described thought as inseparably bound to things and tools, and sought to relocate philosophy in purposive action, in which objects are commonly known when they are put to use. Heidegger, however, was eventually horrified by a world coming to be governed by technology and its manipulations. He turned to an occult and lyrical exploration of "Being." Hook, by contrast, had no patience for such leaps past reason, and he saw technology as an instrument that denotes purpose as well as power.

During the 1930s and early 1940s, Hook had been absorbed in radical politics, and in writing on Marxism. Not until the 1950s did he return to "pure" philosophy and address again the subject of metaphysics. The postwar years had witnessed the revival of metaphysics in Thomistic Catholicism, Protestant existentialism, and Hegelian idealism. Convinced that such philosophical currents were false, and that they had conservative political tendencies, Hook wrote *The Quest for Being* (1953), in which he took on all who promised a deliverance from history and materialism, and challenged the "cognitive legitimacy of metaphysics and ontology."

The problem with metaphysics, according to Hook, is that it shuns the practical for the ineffable, and misleads philosophers into assuming that they can say something profound about the obscure and the opaque. Quine and Tillich were two of Hook's disparate villains, for their view that abstract concepts can tell us something about the ontological status of reality. Hook was determined to rehabilitate empiricism. For Hook, the categories with which one thinks and organizes experience themselves undergo change, and therefore they cannot reflect the nature of things. Pragmatic knowledge aims not to grasp things, but to experiment with them, and in the process perhaps to transform them. To know is to do.

Heidegger's ontological quest left Hook wondering why an eminent philosopher would want to know the unknowable. The obsession with "Being" seemed, for Hook, to turn philosophy into a search for a phantom Absolute. Hook had no quarrel with Heidegger's notion that the metaphysical questioner is implicated in his question and thus can never know the world independently of its relation to himself. But Heidegger's conviction that the philosopher, unable to stand apart from Being to study it, can hope to understand it by participating in it, looked like transcendental nonsense. The concept of Being, Hook exploded, has no "intelligible opposite" other than "non-being," and non-being cannot be regarded as coeval with existence.

His conclusion that Heidegger's formulation of ontological issues was "devoid of sense except as a sign of emotional anxiety" tells much about Hook's philosophical temper. Hook wished to measure Heidegger by the standards of scientific thought and the rules of logic. He had no natural sympathy with anguish, with guilt about death, with the abyss, with nothingness. All his life he retained an unwavering confidence in science, pragmatism, and simple common sense. (I wonder what he would have made of the recent revival of pragmatism in American philosophy, owed largely to Richard Rorty, who has claimed that Dewey and Heidegger were traveling the same philosophical road away from truth and certainty and toward language and contingency.) The danger to modern man was not metaphysical dread, but visionary ideas and vain actions. Earlier in his career, Hook even tried to convince his fellow Ameri-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cans that communism, too, could be supported as a pragmatic proposition.

IV.

The rebellion against the dialectic that Hook fostered in the 1940s and 1950s was the result of a brilliant schooling in the Marxist tradition in the 1930s. And the anti-Communist activism for which Hook became famous was the fruit of a strict intellectual encounter with the Marxist tradition, an encounter in which Hook's politics and philosophy were curiously brought together.

Marxism is not a dogmatic "system" but a scientific "critique," Hook wrote to Dewey from Berlin in 1929. He was studying Marxism as a Guggenheim scholar in Germany and at the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow. He befriended the Marxist philosopher Karl Korsch and translated his writings into English, and he read the work of Georg Lukacs. Hook, Korsch, and Lukacs were engaged, in fact, in a similar project, in the same project that gave Gramsci work in his prison cell: how to free the voluntaristic elements in Marxism from a mechanical and deterministic theory of history.

The context of Hook's first writings on Marxism was crucial, politically and philosophically. The CPUSA had yet to claim a major American intellectual. Having expelled Will Herberg, Jay Lovestone, and Bertram Wolfe in 1929, the Party lost some of the best Marxist theoreticians in the country. Although Earl Browder was unhappy with Hook's "reinterpretation" of Marxism, and Communists would soon attack him as a "revisionist," the Party tried to recruit Hook, as a means of getting to Dewey and, to Hook's dismay, to do organizational and propaganda work for Russia. (The Party was also interested in having Hook set up a "spy apparatus," a proposition that left him "in a state of panic.") A year before his meeting with Browder, Hook signed "Culture and Crisis," a document in which leading American intellectuals endorsed the 1932 Communist presidential ticket. Still, Hook would have nothing to do with the Party; and thus America remained a country with a Communist Party but without a leading Communist philosopher.

The theoretical context is also important. Since the Second International (1889-1914), Marxism had been regarded as an empirical science, in which the laws of history unfolded according to predetermined stages. The practical consequence of that doctrine was that the transition to socialism must await economic development. That fatalistic view prevailed until the October Revolution, when Lenin broke the spell of theory by seizing power. Thinkers such as Lukacs, Gramsci, and the American Max Eastman subsequently credited Lenin with showing the way to freedom, will, and consciousness. Hook, by contrast, had interpreted Marxism itself as no less a philosophy of freedom than a philosophy of determinism. For Hook, Marxism was a theory according to which human activity could break from mechanical necessity, once science is conceived not as the unfolding of laws or as the inexorable realization of ideals, but as the practical application of intelligence for the purpose of social change.

In *Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx* (1933) and *From Hegel to Marx* (1936), Hook argued that the famous "paradoxes" of Marx's thought—between theoretical analysis and revolutionary activism, between scientific objectivity and class teleology—were the result of confrontations with the thought of opponents "whose positions are antithetical to each other." Hook's Marx was a fox, not a hedgehog, a philosopher who adapted his theory to changing conditions and judged any course of action in the light of its consequences. And a fox is a pragmatist. Hook drew parallels between Marxism and pragmatism, which were corroborated, he believed, by Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, the one about philosophers having not to interpret the world but to change it. Did not Dewey and Marx share a common commitment to *praxis*, to the idea that knowledge cannot be verified in thought but only embodied in practice?

Many radicals of the Depression years embraced communism for its promise to rid society of the curse of property, but Hook seems to have turned to Marxism for its promise to rid philosophy of the curse of epistemology. With Marxism, as with pragmatism, philosophy no longer depended on the "correspondence" theory of truth that requires ideas to represent accurately the real world. Hook insisted that Marxism rested on naturalism rather than metaphysics, on the stream of experience rather than the abstractions of reason. Even the dialectical content of Marxism did not mean that capitalism was fated to collapse by the weight of its contradictions; it demonstrated, instead, that knowledge arises out of experimental encounters with reality and is verified empirically. As a "plan of action," Marxism is a scientific instrument, not a doctrinaire ideology. The union of his two intellectual allegiances must have been satisfying to the young thinker.

Surely Hook exaggerated the activist ethos of Marxism, preferring for philo-

BERNARD SCHWARTZ

"Bernard Schwartz's book goes a long way to help the lay person understand what is at stake in appointments to the federal judiciary."
— Molly Yard, National Organization for Women

$32.50 cloth

ABORTION AND WOMAN'S CHOICE
THE STATE, SEXUALITY, AND REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM
Revised Edition

ROSALIND POLLACK PETCHESKY

This classic has been significantly revised to reflect the ramifications of the 1989 Supreme Court decision in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services.*

$14.95 paper

INTERPRETING THE CONSTITUTION
THE DEBATE OVER ORIGINAL INTENT

EDITED BY JACK N. RAKOVE

Essays by Edwin Meese, III, William J. Brennan, Jr., Robert H. Bork, Lino Graglia, H. Jefferson Powell, Charles A. Lofgren, Paul Brest, Henry Paul Monaghan, and J. Morgan Kousser.

$16.95 paper
$45.00 cloth

CRUCIAL ISSUES, CRUCIAL BOOKS

AT BOOKSTORES

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY PRESS • BOSTON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sophical reasons to overlook its assumptions about the nature of knowledge. True, both Marxism and pragmatism assume that to understand the world is to act upon it and thereby to alter it. Marx himself could hardly have subscribed to a pragmatic criterion of verification, however, and at the same time claimed to have learned from history. If knowledge can be neither introspectively discoverable nor retrospectively recoverable, if it cannot be accurately represented by the correspondence of words to things, if knowledge must await scientific verification, how could Marx have written so confidently about the past, or dared to establish historical laws that would predict the future?

When Hook published his first work on Marxism, he was a revolutionary Communist who questioned neither Stalin's silencing of all opposition nor Lenin's principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. His readers were taught why all forms of government must be abolished ("Wherever we find a state, there we find a dictatorship"), and why dissent and opposition could not be tolerated ("The first task the proletarian dictatorship much accomplish is to crush all actual or incipient counterrevolutionary movements"). But Hook's flirtation with totalitarianism lasted only a few years. In 1935, in a debate with Will Herberg, Hook challenged the principle of party dictatorship and the assumption (which would be developed by E. H. Carr) that the victory of the Bolsheviks over all other factions proved their superior grasp of the direction of history and endorsed their claim that only they could represent the interest of the workers.

But what, then, remained of Marxism as a philosophical proposition? That question led to one of the liveliest and wittiest debates in the annals of the American left. Hook and Eastman had been going at it since 1928, when Hook wrote a scathing review of Eastman's *Marx and Lenin: The Science of Revolution* (1926). Earlier, in his journal *Liberator*, Eastman had depicted Lenin as a scientific "genius" and the "engineer" of the October Revolution, as the brilliant Bolshevik who, in seizing power, rescued Marxism from the complacent illusions of German idealism. (Gramsci was thrilled by Eastman's writings and ran them in *L'Ordine Nuovo*.) But when Eastman's book appeared and made a sharp distinction between Marx the philosophical determinist and Lenin the revolutionary activist, Hook was furious, and accused Eastman of reading too much Hegelianism into Marxism. When Hook's books on Marxism appeared in the early 1930s, Eastman was waiting to settle the score.

In some respects, Eastman's criticism of Hook curiously resembles Hook's later criticism of Heidegger, except that in Hook's case the occult entity under attack was not "Being" but "the Dialectic." The notion that the dialectic offered (in Hook's words) "the philosophical rhythms of conscious life" seemed to Eastman a species of "animism," the primitive fallacy of reading into the objective world the unfolding of human desires and purposes. The dialectic had no more empirical warrant, said Eastman, than the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In a pamphlet called "The Last Stand of Dialectical Materialism," Eastman asked why Hook had to characterize Marx's philosophy

> as "naturalistic activism," "social behaviorism," "revolutionary voluntarism," "voluntaristic humanism," "activistic atheism," "critical historicism," "realistic evolutionary naturalism," "Aristotelianism saturated with temporalism," and other long-tailed horny epithets very disheartening to a man who is not accustomed to take his vacations in the library.

Hook's son has recently remarked that his father treasured these debates with Eastman, which lasted a decade. The "Debate of the Colossi," as Max Schachtman dubbed it, led to a "doctrinal crisis" on the left. The controversy reached absurd heights when Trotsky stepped in to explain to Eastman, Hook, and James Burnham how even animals can think dialectically. ("Clearly, the legs of a fox are equipped with Hegelian tendencies. . . .") Hook continued to insist that Marx had successfully dispelled Hegelian metaphysics, that Marxism could be appreciated as science. Without ever acknowledging that Eastman had been right about the mystifying magic of the dialectic, Hook went to work on the concept and left it in shambles. In the short-lived *Marxist Quarterly*, Hook addressed the subject of "Dialectic and Nature" and exposed Engels's distortions once and for all. He demonstrated that all the Hegelian categories that Engels read into the "logical" processes of nature itself—the law of contradiction, the transformation of quantity into quality, the negation of the negation, and so on—were pure "mythology."

In 1943 Hook's *The Hero in History* offered his final scrutiny of all that remained obscurantist in Marxist theory. This time the object of his withering logic was not only dialectical materialism, but also the notion of historical inevitability, which was virtually a Marxist mystique. Hook drew a distinction between the "event-making man," whose actions derive from exceptional capacities of intelligence, will, and character rather than contingencies of circumstance, and the "eventful man," whose actions were decisive in influencing historical development in dramatically different directions than it would otherwise have taken. By combining both, Lenin's role in the Bolshevik Revolution refutes the historical determinism of the orthodox Marxists, those Second International theorists who adduced the "logic" of history instead of human will. (Later, in *Marx and the Marxists*, 1955, Hook charged Lenin with betraying the Revolution, and drew a distinction between the totalitarian consequences of Lenin and the democratic values of Marx and his commitment to the workers.)

Unlike many ex-radicals of the 1930s, Hook never exactly repudiated Marxism. He continued to believe in the enduring relevance of Marx's sense of property as a fundamental category of social relations. He continued to approve of Marx's historical and biological materialism that, like pragmatic naturalism, extirpated dualism and properly made the mind seem continuous with nature. And most important, he continued to value Marx's "humanism," as it was reflected in "his distrust of overspecialization and excessive division of labor, his concern with human alienation and his view that it can be overcome by creative fulfillments through uncoerced work." When Ronald Reagan bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom on Sidney Hook, he pinned it on a Marxist. (Memories of Menshevism still linger in the orange groves at the Hoover Institution.)

Hook remained, of course, a pragmatist. He always refused to deduce political conclusions from theoretical premises. In the postwar years, when thinkers on the left and the right assumed that the fate of freedom depended upon the mode of production, collectivist or capitalist, when both the Bolshevik and the businessman (as Hook observed in *The New Leader*) claimed that political freedom is a "byproduct, or superstructural addition to," society's economic foundation, Hook demurred. He had no patience with the "causal monism" that reduced history to predetermined alternatives. Thus, when Eastman drew on F. A. Hayek to insist that a planned economy had ushered in Communist and fascist dictatorships, Hook pointed out that Bolsheviks, blackshirts, and brownshirts first seized political power and then installed collectivist and corporatist systems. Italy and Germany, he argued, fell not to "creeping socialism," but to antidemocratic party movements; and in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Russia socialism died before the Bolsheviks allowed it to be born. Hook never saw an incompatibility between democracy and socialism.

V.

In the battle over religion that raged during the war years, new scholastics struck the first blow in the name of Aquinas. Shortly after Western Europe was conquered by the Wehrmacht in 1940, a conference of philosophers and scientists in New York heard Mortimer J. Adler deliver an address on "God and the Professors." Adler charged that positivists and pragmatists represented a more serious threat to democracy than Hitler, whose "nihilism" was at least "more honest and consistent, less blurred by subtleties and queasy qualifications." Adler claimed that metaphysics was vital in defeating fascism. The unwillingness of many American intellectuals to take up arms against Hitler ("Our Guilt in Fascism," as Waldo Frank called it in THE NEW REPUBLIC) was attributed to a "modernist" outlook that rejected the absolute nature of values that were accessible to philosophical intuition independently of scientific discovery.

Of course, the claims for metaphysics made by Adler and his idol, the Aristotelian Robert Maynard Hutchins, never really passed the test proposed by its own advocates. Ontological thought hardly saved Heidegger from Hitler; nor did Aristotle and Aquinas help the isolationist Hutchins grasp the necessity of America's entry into the war. Even toward the end of the war, when news of the fate of the Jews reached America, Catholic thinkers were still blaming the ravages of war and dictatorship on professors and intellectuals, and remained steadfastly silent about the Vatican's conduct during what later became known as the Holocaust.

Hook responded to Adler with an article in THE NEW REPUBLIC on "The New Medievalism," and when Protestant theologians joined Catholics in attacking secular intellectuals, he asked Dewey to join him in a symposium on "The New Failure of Nerve" in *Partisan Review*. Hook and Dewey pointed out that fascism and communism had little to do with intelligence and the methods of science, and a great deal to do with emotion and the madness of dogma. While the more patient Dewey tried to explain the principles of scientific naturalism, Hook took off after theologians and other defenders of religion with a fury driven by feeling and by logic.

In those articles, and in the essays gathered in *The Quest for Being*, Hook surveyed the theological currents of the day as a "skeptical God-seeker" willing to go to the ends of the earth "to track down every last semblance of evidence or argument" that would illuminate the case for a Supreme Being. Hook doubted logic's capacity to prove the "necessary" existence of God conceived as either transcendent or immanent. When one interlocutor advised Hook that it matters not that religious doctrine is true, but that it is believed for the sake of social order, Hook invoked the Grand Inquisitor and his condescending defense of "organized irrationalism in behalf of human freedom," which amounted, in Hook's view, to "an intellectual absurdity." Hook remained loyal to Feuerbach in his conviction that attributions to God are projections of human needs in a world threatened by impersonal things, that religion is an expression of longing or an objectification of experience. Hook suggested that religion belonged to "philosophical anthropology."

He departed from his master Dewey, moreover, in rejecting the idea that the use of the term "God" is legitimate for secular humanism's moral purposes. In politics, as well as in ethics, the idea that democracy required spiritual foundations had been an axiom of the critics of pragmatism. Hook denied that the theological dogmas of "Hebraic Christianity" are the historical sources of modern democracy. He wrote firmly in the spirit of *The Federalist*, in which the Framers' suspicions of all religious claims to doctrinal authority rendered them distrustful of factions driven by "zeal," which they likened to oppressive Protestant "sects." (Hook did respect Reinhold Niebuhr, though, who spoke for the impossibility of knowing truth and the obligation to seek it.)

Hook's treatment of religion and metaphysics drew criticism not only from theists, but also from American philosophers who refused to identify the life of the mind solely with the life of scientific inquiry. Richard Bernstein reminded Hook that Heidegger and the existentialists based their claims, like the pragmatists, on "appeals to experience," and Henry David Aiken suggested that "the despair of man in our time" derives not from his "ignorance" but from his "wickedness, his inhumanity, and his passion for self-destruction," all of which a Deweyan faith in education failed to recognize. In his last major philosophical book, *Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life* (1973), Hook answered his critics on their own grounds.

In those years, in the 1950s and 1960s, existentialism, phenomenology, theology, and Freudianism seemed to leave pragmatism behind. Dewey's doctrines

Want to brush up on a foreign language?

With Audio-Forum's intermediate and advanced materials, it's easy to maintain and sharpen your foreign-language skills.

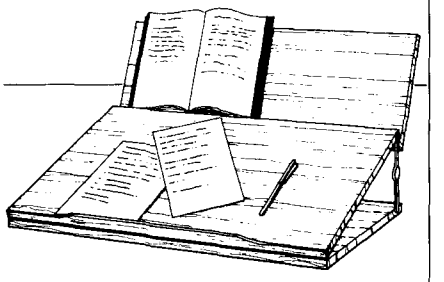
Besides intermediate and advanced audio-cassette courses—most developed for the U.S. State Dept.—we offer foreign-language mystery dramas, dialogs recorded in Paris, games, music, and many other helpful materials. And if you want to learn a new language, we have beginning courses for adults and for children.

We offer introductory and advanced materials in most of the world's languages: French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Greek, Russian, Portuguese, Swedish, Korean, etc. – 191 courses in 56 languages.

Call 1-800-225-5400 for FREE 36-p catalog, or write:

AUDIO-FORUM®
Room 2124, 96 Broad Street,
Guilford, CT 06437 (203) 453-9794

Inclined to Work



When monks labored to produce their beautiful manuscripts, they found that an inclined work surface lessened fatigue. If you write, edit, or take notes you may find that this re-creation, dubbed the Ergo Desk™, is just what you need to work more productively. The 14-by-25-inch writing surface assumes a 19 degree angle, while the built-in bookrest holds reading materials at a comfortable distance and angle. By keeping papers underneath, it actually increases usable desk space. The Ergo Desk™ is made in the USA of 1/2-inch solid alder (a light-colored hardwood). It folds flat and, with its built-in handle, may be carried like a briefcase.

Ergo Desk™ **$125 + $7.50** shipping.
Save $25 on a pair:
Pair of Ergo Desks™ **$225 + $9.75** ship.

MC/VISA/AMEX/Check
Money-Back Guarantee • Catalog on Request
Add 6% sales tax to Florida shipments
800-544-0880 or 407-276-4141

LEVENGER™
Tools for Serious Readers
975 S. Congress Ave., Code NRED1, Delray, FL 33445

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

looked like an arid, scientistic mode of inquiry that avoided questions of meaning and value. The pragmatic rationalist, Hook reported, "is pictured as a man without feeling, taste, emotion, or even a genuine desire for human happiness." Reason came to be identified with instrumental rationality, and the mind as a kind of impersonal organ or instrument content to measure and control. How could pragmatism be a noble philosophy if it failed to address ultimate questions?

Hook had an answer, naturally. Pragmatism's nobility, he wrote, lies in its recognition that genuine moral decisions have a tragic dimension in situations where "good conflicts with good." Pragmatism offers no promise about rightful outcomes, no certainty that some good may not be sacrificed in pursuit of justice and freedom. Human action is fraught with moral ambiguity regardless of its intention. "Many have been the attempts to escape the antinomies between the right and the good by defining the good as the object of right or the right merely as the means to the good. All have failed." The pragmatist can scarcely endorse the Kantian view that some duties are imperatives that must "always" be carried out. All important decisions, Hook explained to pragmatism's critics, depend on circumstances, and probably on consequences; and thus the rationalist cannot escape the agony of choice.

Hook's sensitivity toward the antinomies of value—he was not quite the doctrinaire scold that he sometimes seemed to be—was applied to political philosophy in *The Paradoxes of Freedom* (1970), an exploration of the dilemmas of a democratic culture in which rights are regarded as absolute. Addressing Justice Black's conviction that the Bill of Rights cannot be abridged, Hook explained that the claims of some rights can entail the infringement of others. (The right of freedom of the press, for example, may jeopardize the right to a fair trial.) Hook saw no possibility of establishing a philosophical ultimate on which to base such decisions, and insisted that public issues must be left to the democratic process rather than the courts. Hook believed in "participatory democracy" as fervently as did the authors of the Port Huron statement; but he believed in democracy as a "regulative" rather than a realizable ideal, as a method rather than an absolute.

Hook's horror of absolutes was vividly illustrated in 1989, a few months before his death, in his thoughts on Allan Bloom. Hook admired Bloom for denouncing the influence of the New Left assaults on the campus, but the matter did not end there. Bloom traced the whole problem to the belief that "truth is relative," and one can imagine Hook's juices boiling at that: *The Closing of the American Mind* gave Hook a final occasion to vindicate the legacy of Dewey. "Bloom's whole discussion of the theme from the first page to the last is vitiated by a fundamental blunder," he wrote. "He confuses subjectivism with moral relativity." Hook instructed Bloom on the meaning of "relationism" or "objective relativism," that ideas and propositions are not subjective or arbitrary, but dependent upon historical circumstances for their possible fulfillment. Hook insisted that such a dependence was a strength, not a weakness, and cited the "pragmatic genius" of Lincoln. "Bloom assumes," he wrote,

> that there exists one underlying good that can be grasped if we understand "the nature of man," and from which all moral judgments of good or bad can be ultimately derived in all situations. . . . Not only is this position false, but demonstrably false. . . . The difficulty with Bloom's position is that, like Leo Strauss, he has not emancipated himself from the Greek notion that the cosmos is also an ethos, and that what is good and bad, right and wrong for man is essentially related to the cosmic order rather than to the reflective choices of men and women confronted by problems of what to do.

Between the pragmatists and the Straussians, Hook saw no grounds of reconciliation: "We are separated by an abyss."

The abyss, however, was not Sidney Hook's natural habitat. Sartre's pronouncement that "if we must die then our life has no meaning" seemed meaningless to him, another failure of nerve, another refusal to accept mortality with dignity. "Agony over death," he observed,

> strikes me as one of the unloveliest features of the intellectual life of our philosophic times—and certainly unworthy of any philosophy which conceives of itself as a quest for wisdom. It has never been clear to me why those who are nauseated by life, not by this or that kind of life but any kind of life, should be so fearful of death.

The philosopher Hook never feared death. And he was so much the philosopher that death was his last subject. Among his papers were found writings on the right to die and the uses of death that he had written as a graduate student in the early 1920s. In *Convictions*, a posthumously published collection of essays, Hook describes lying at the point of death, hospitalized with congestive heart failure, "drowning in a sea of slime," and unsuccessfully requesting the doctors to pull the life support plugs. "I had paid my dues to death," he wrote. "The sight of hundreds of persons living on mattress graves in the home of the disabled and incurable in which my father took twenty-five years to die had made me a fervent believer in voluntary euthanasia." And then Hook proceeded to do philosophy in a hospital bed, to argue about the problem of Job and the unacceptability of human affliction, to expound on the concepts of good and evil that are supposed to explain it. His own death was near, but the old atheist was enjoying a final round with God. •

The Unwild Ones

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

Beyond the Boom: New Voices on American Life, Culture, and Politics edited by Terry Teachout

(Poseidon Press, 240 pp., $18.95)

In *The Armies of the Night*, Norman Mailer proposed putting some spitfire into the names of activist groups. Who would want to go to the wall for the National Conference for a New Politics or the National Lawyers' Guild? he asked. "The new parties of the Left," he wrote, "ought to have names like motorcycle gangs and block athletic clubs had on their jackets: George Street Jumpers, and Green Dolphins, Orange Sparrows, Gasoline Ghosts, Paragon A.C., Purple Raiders, Silver Dragons, Bughouse Beasts." It would add romance to the cause. And think of the time it would save. Instant identification! Instead of indoctrination, initiation rites. Instead of Trotskyite distinctions, a tribal clash of tattoos. Armed with reading material, rival gangs would be ready to rumble. *You kids, you go outside if you're gonna argue. I gotta candy store to run!*

One urban coalition has adopted Mail-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

er's notion, but they're not of the left. They take their name from a novel by that raging Tory, Evelyn Waugh. They call themselves the Vile Body. The first Wednesday of each month, they muscle into a townhouse on Manhattan's Upper West Side to toss around bold ideas and fortify themselves with snacks. (Stale popcorn and pretzels, we're told.) Oh, I suppose you could call it a salon. They're certainly not street punks, this posse. "We work on Wall Street and at major corporations, for newspapers and magazines and publishing houses and think tanks; we are busy writing our first books, starting up our first companies, making our first movies, raising our first children," writes Terry Teachout, Vile Body's reigning spokesmodel. And their shining example radiates far beyond their local turf. "[L]argely without benefit of publicity, [we] are helping to change the way America votes and thinks and lives," claims Teachout in his foreword to this collection of essays by Vile Body members, which features an introductory nod from that contemporary Tory, Tom Wolfe. It's more of a nod-out than a nod. Wolfe has seldom made such an after-dinner drone. When you read the book, you understand why.

Who are the Vile Bodies? An elite corps of baby boomers born too late to burn their draft cards or boogie butt-naked at Woodstock. Baby boomers who refused to follow their older brothers and sisters *over the ridge*. Unlike their militant siblings, these boomers (many of them contributors to *National Review*, *The New Criterion*, and *The American Spectator*) were never converts to Maoism or Marxist-Leninism. They never spelled America with a "k." They never felt orgasm was The Answer. Vile Body George Sim Johnston writes:

> I think most of us, once past the hormonal onslaught of adolescence, would tacitly agree with a remark of the late George Homans, one of the last great Boston Brahmins to get tenure at Harvard. Professor Homans would pause during his lecture on African kinship patterns, look down on his undergraduate sociology class—a sea of denim and workshirts—and say impressively, "Let's come off it, ladies and gentlemen: sex is not *that* important."

So wipe that afterglow off your face and heed the hoot of that wise old owl, the Boston Brahmin. (Another contributor to the book is Richard Brookhiser, author of the forthcoming *The Way of the WASP: How It Made America and How It Can Save It, So to Speak*. My God, has Bush's time in the White House taught us nothing?)

Never having bought into their generation's value system, the Vile Bodies have few youthful follies to repent. They were never far enough left to make their swing to the right seem like a lurch. Which drains the essays in *Beyond the Boom* of inherent drama. Unlike the authors of *The God That Failed*, unlike Whittaker Chambers (Teachout edited a volume of Chambers's journalism), they have no dark nights of the soul to recount on the road to political apostasy, no dashed hopes. Even liberals who defected to neoconservatism had a few scars to bare. By their own accounts, the Vile Bodies have always been bystanders, non-joiners by nature. They pride themselves on not being easily swayed.

Teachout stresses the lack of party line. "Some of us are traditional conservatives, others radical libertarians. Some of us like to watch 'Yo! MTV Raps,' others prefer to commune with Mozart and Verdi. Some of us are orthodox Catholics, some secular Jews, some staunch atheists." But there's one article of faith that rouses a solid amen. "The only thing on which you can be sure all of us agree is this: that the political and intellectual legacies of our older brothers and sisters, the baby boomers of the '60s, were a flop, a failure, a disaster."

Feminism, free love, affirmative action, gay rights, the greening of America, drug indulgence, Phil Donahue—every apple in the Garden of Eden sprouted a worm. Laying the blame for these bummers on big bro' and sis (they were the ones who made the mess, Ma!), the Vile Bodies sit on the stoop and primp. "It wasn't long before I abandoned my warm and fuzzy fantasy of becoming a psychotherapist and went off to seek my true destiny," writes Teachout of his drift into political journalism, wetting his cowlick with a touch of irony. Reading *Beyond the Boom*, you realize Terry's team has had it pretty soft. There's so little fight in them. These Vile Bodies are a bunch of Smurfs.

Not that they don't have worries. The Y-word is their cross to bear. "We of the baby boom generation are yuppies," writes Vile Body Maggie Gallagher in mock admission. "We commit gentrification and other heinous sins." Vile Body Richard Vigilante is also rankled:

> The yuppie myth is the myth of a generation at once cynical, soulless, and self-obsessed; faultlessly fashionable, yet philistine; rootless, yet appallingly attached to material goods and overpaid for not terribly useful work, much of which includes lying, cheating, and writing obnoxious ad campaigns.

(Teachout might have done some useful work by helping Vigilante tidy up that sentence.) Where Gallagher and Vigilante meet is in arguing that the bloom is off the rose in Reagan's cheeks.

Despite Reaganomics, their generation is less well-off than their parents', more hag-ridden over the future. The entire middle class has suffered slippage—an analysis that ought to put them in bed with Barbara Ehrenreich. (I think I just heard Barbara Ehrenreich fall out of bed.) But of course the Vile Bodies wouldn't think of betraying their gang colors. Defending Reagan, Vigilante insists that it's runaway bureaucrats with their hands in the cookie jar who are gobbling the public good. What's needed is a reassertion of bourgeois authority. Only the bourgeoisie can serve as a buffer zone between the yachting class and the mad-dog hordes. It's their civic duty:

> When the bourgeoisie lacks the confidence to impose on the less successful the same strict standards of behavior it expects from its own members, and lacks the clout to demand that government enforce those standards, then people will be at each others' throats all the time. In the ensuing chaos, the working class, that auxiliary police force of the bourgeoisie, will impose its rough justice on those it (usually wrongly) perceives as enemies of society, which is roughly what happened in Bensonhurst and Howard Beach.

It won't be easy, drowning out this drumbeat. Politics is overrun with charlatans like Jesse Jackson and "[such] giants among men as Walter Mondale and Michael Dukakis." Culture, too, has become a cesspool. "[W]e get rotten efforts from cheap hustlers, testosterone-deficient poseurs, and avaricious cokeheads," writes Vigilante, an indictment seconded by Vile Body Roger Kimball, serving cold leftovers from his book *Tenured Radicals* in an essay titled "Requiem for the Critical Temper." Kimball finds it grim going on the cultural front these days. Back in the 1950s there were real eminences in the literary reviews. Eliot, Trilling, Blackmur, McCarthy, Jarrell. And today? A pygmy parade of pip-squeak academics marches through the footnotes as run-amok deconstructionists spray-paint fast-drying formulas.

As someone who has his own stack of *Partisan Review* back issues, I can attest that it's sometimes shaming to see how much seriousness has fled the scene. Criticism then had iron lobes. But Kimball overdoes the decline, reading telltale signs in questionable tea leaves. He laments that when Princeton University Press held a book party for the first volume of W. H. Auden's collected works in 1989, it was a lackluster affair. "[E]ven ten years ago, one could not have imagined the first volume of Auden's collected works being published without a huge fanfare and celebration. Today, such lit-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

erary fetes are reserved for the likes of E. L. Doctorow and Norman Mailer." Perhaps the party was poorly organized. And Auden, after all, had shed his wrinkled skin. Why not honor the living? That "likes of" makes it sound as if Doctorow and Mailer don't deserve even the stale munchies they serve at Vile Body powwows. Doctorow has written at least two impressive novels (*The Book of Daniel*, *Ragtime*), and Mailer in his prime could have wiped the snot out of the Vile Bodies all by his lonesome. There's nothing in *Beyond the Boom* as powerful, impassioned, and plugged-in as the best pages of *Advertisements for Myself* and *Cannibals and Christians*.

Kimball thinks that simply to sneer at certain names is to discredit their work. He takes the same tack on the visual arts, reducing Andy Warhol and Cindy Sherman to curds and whey. "Our vaunted cultural 'pluralism' is really a destructive cultural promiscuity," he writes, lisping like a dummy on Hilton Kramer's lap. "It may be heresy to say so, but, in the deepest sense, a taste for the cynical frivolousness of a Warhol or a Sherman renders one incapable of appreciating great art." His prissiness must be catching, because in the essay that follows Kimball's, Vile Body Donna Rifkind also makes cobwebbed pronouncements. In "How to Succeed in the Lit Biz Without Really Trying," Rifkind says that brat-pack writers such as Jay McInerney, Tama Janowitz, and Bret Easton Ellis have done too much partying and paid too little dues. Who would argue?

The weakness in her essay comes from its admittedly old-fashioned prescriptions. The vocation of literature, she says, has no place for cliques or communities of any kind. Really? What about the Ford-James-Wells-Crane-Conrad circle? Auden-Isherwood-Spender? Bloomsbury? Reinforced with quotations from Gibbon, James, and Cyril Connolly, Rifkind urges a break with one's peers and a communion with the masters. Make like monks, she advises. Shun worldly pleasures. Eat rarefied air. "Diversions notwithstanding, the vocation of literature is a purely lonely enterprise." I think we'd be wiser to lose this loftiness. Writers need each other in the encouraging flesh. As Seymour Krim wrote, "The young need the young more than they need the old and honored: great writers take care of themselves and don't need monuments and schools since their influence is always present; but the brilliant kid writer can be crushed or turned into a foolish acrobat unless he gets an enthusiastic response from his contemporaries." Kimball and Rifkind would have writers emulating Schroeder in *Peanuts*, playing head-bowed with a bust of Beethoven on the piano. But creative homage only takes you so far.

The Vile Bodies defend tradition in the darndest places. In "Whatever Happened to Doris Day?" Vile Body Bruce Bawer glows in the dark remembering the star of *Pillow Talk* and *That Touch of Mink*. "Throughout my tender years, the movies as I knew them had been summed up in the single glorious and inviolate image of Doris Day," he recalls, as starstruck as Rex Reed. A case can indeed be made for defending the screen's deposed virgin queen. Her best comedies had a cocktail-hour bubble, with actors such as Gig Young in *Teacher's Pet* and Tony Randall in *Lover, Come Back* adding genuine fizz. (That's what movie comedies don't have these days, amiable support.) Bawer isn't interested, however, in repolishing what Dwight Macdonald called Day's Good Bone Structure. He uses her generically. "To be sure, Doris frequently went under the name of Julie Andrews or Debbie Reynolds, and sometimes she even dyed her hair, acted a bit more genteel, and called herself Audrey Hepburn." Whatever head Day had on her shoulders, down below she fastened a chastity belt. The delaying tactics of courtship in Doris Day comedies separated the true suitors from the clever wolves. It was a selection process in which the best man won.

The reward was a ring on the finger, champagne in the penthouse, and the promise of forever after. A civilized prospect that was run over and left for dead with the hairy arrival of *Easy Rider*. With its goofing on squares and its anti-authority groove, *Easy Rider* was the ballad of the new barbarism. "For *Easy Rider* and its ilk weren't primarily out to entertain," argues Bawer. They were out to propagandize:

> Weak on character and strong on dialogue, they sought rather to embody the vapid slogans of Youth Culture, to epitomize the politically correct generational attitude toward Life (which, for the baby boomers, generally meant life-style), toward Politics and Culture, toward War and Peace.

These days it's as fashionable to knock *Easy Rider* as it is to disparage Doris Day. Its stoned non sequiturs made possible the careers of Cheech & Chong. But at the time the movie caught something ominous in the air, a floating unease in America's expanses (part gas fumes, part marijuana smoke), a fated head-on collision of values. And audiences had never seen anything as offbeat original as Jack Nicholson's liberal Southern lawyer, wearing a football helmet and hitting his lines with a soft dagger. Lambasting the influences of the counterculture (a Vile Body tic—they must practice in front of mirrors), Bawer ignores the key development that led to the dethroning of Doris Day: the influx of foreign films into the art house in the 1950s and 1960s whose up-close informality made Hollywood movies of the period look like showroom windows.

It wasn't weirdos doing wheelies who returned Doris Day to the doll house. It was Jeanne Moreau, smoking cigarettes and looking as crumpled as her bedsheets, Sophia Loren, laughing and leaning over the balcony: *womanly* women, in movies that had a papery rustle rather than a plastic coating. The personal statements of such foreign directors as Truffaut, Godard, Antonioni, and Kurosawa made possible the personal stabs of Scorsese, Coppola, Peckinpah, and Altman. So determined is Bawer to turn back the clock that he doesn't register that the 1970s were an incredibly exciting time in American movies, a heroic burst. To find anything positive in the popular arts of the 1960s and 1970s would be to violate the unwritten bylaws of the Vile Body. Aesthetics to them is merely a sidebar to sociology, which in turn is merely a guide to the groupthink of their generation. (Vile Body John Podhoretz, son of Norman, nearly gives himself a hernia in *Beyond the Boom* lifting the heavy implications of *E.T.*)

The final chapter in the book is Teachout's own "A Farewell to Politics." Once a committed Reaganite, he's adjusting to the twilight. "I still write editorials for the *Daily News*, and I mean to do so for some time to come. It's a good job, and I don't care to fall off the ladder of professional success now that I've become something of a yuppie." No wonder *Daily News* editorials have packed so little punch. They're written by a man with one eye on his lunchbox. ("We've got to protect our phony-baloney jobs!" cried Mel Brooks in *Blazing Saddles*.) Teachout thinks we should all tend to our lunchboxes:

> It strikes me that in the wake of Ronald Reagan, we are finally beginning to return to our normal, time-honored course, one in which the average citizen is content to go about the business of living his private life, leaving politics to the professionals who have chosen it as a vocation.

Yet what the budget impasse proves is how foolish it is to leave politics to the politicians. They'll do a marathon dance to the death.

The Vile Bodies despise dropouts on the left for being irresponsible deadbeats. But Teachout touts his opt-out from politics into private practice with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

little rubs of his belly. He's so *full*:

> I wax passionate as I stare at the green screen of my word processor and think about the things that matter to me. And when I grow tired of carrying my new lance, I turn to a book I'm writing about what it was like to grow up in a small Midwestern town in the '60s and '70s, a book that contains not a trace of politics in it, that is all about home and family and the more abundant life.

(Teachout and touch someone.)

This retreat into a mental scrapbook reflects the nostalgia running through *Beyond the Boom*, and the malaise. The Vile Bodies long for the days when there was a barbecue on every lawn, a Boston Brahmin at the lectern, Doris Day on the big screen, Ronald Reagan on horseback, no minorities barging across the lawn. (One of the few references to blacks in *Beyond the Boom* involves muggers.) That's why they have so little fight; they can't imagine anything better than what they've already had. The only future they want belongs to the past. The Vile Bodies are typical baby boomers after all. They're still gripping the bars of their playpen, refusing to grow up. "One of the most engaging things about the fifteen writers in this volume is their refusal to accept clichés and conventional wisdom," writes Vile Mentor Tom Wolfe. Snap out of it, Tom! Do you really want to baby-sit this bunch? *These kids are older than you are!*

JAMES WOLCOTT writes regularly for *Vanity Fair*.

The Ghosts of Poland

BY JAROSLAW ANDERS

The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman by Andrzej Szczypiorski translated from the Polish by Klara Glowczewska

(Grove Weidenfeld, 208 pp., $16.95)

Moments of crisis and moments of expectation often coincide, in Poland, with an insatiable thirst for historical commemoration and genealogy. National graves are turned up, literally and metaphorically, in search of new proofs of Polish identity. The lost Eastern borderlands, the remnants of the Great Duchy of Lithuania make their comeback as the favorite playground of the national imagination. The Church unfurls its ultramontane banners, and the most heated debates are reserved for collective symbols and historical figures.

Perhaps the most astonishing element in these historical seizures is the ubiquitous presence of the Jews. Their ghosts return to haunt their old domain and show up in thoroughly unexpected places. During the local elections last spring, for example, an invisible hand scribbled "Jews" on all election posters, including those of an anti-Semitic nationalist group. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was sold occasionally in the streets by young people with short haircuts and heavy boots. Even the indomitable Lech Walesa, the master of straight talk who has turned into the artist of verbal bungle, felt compelled to insist that "Jews in government" reveal their origins to the public. Pressed by a reporter, he explained that Jews should be proud of their contribution to Polish history and culture, yet when they conceal their Jewishness they provoke anti-Semitic attitudes. A common theory has it that by "Jews in government" the impatient, populist Walesa means Bronislaw Geremek, the leader of the Solidarity caucus in the Parliament, and Adam Michnik, a deputy in Parliament and editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza* (as well as a contributing editor of this magazine). Neither of them, incidentally, ever "concealed" his origin. Both deny, quite appropriately, that their origin has any public relevance.

At the same time seminars and exhibits devoted to Jewish religion, philosophy, and history abound, and crowds of young Poles born after the Holocaust regularly flock to them. Judaica figures prominently in Polish bookstores: on a recent trip to Poland I spotted, among others, the Polish translation of the Talmud, *The History of Jewish Philosophy* by Heinrich and Marie Simon, several books on the history of Jews in Poland, a Jewish religious calendar, two collections of Jewish jokes, and a Jewish cookbook. "So how is it really?" asked an Israeli visitor at a festival of Jewish culture organized last spring in Krakow. She was

GREAT GIFT FOR MOVIE LOVERS.

Home Film Festival members rent or purchase VHS videotapes by mail. Over 1,200 hard-to-find quality films are available, including ***Betty Blue, Camille Claudel,*** and ***Aguirre–The Wrath of God.***

Our library includes foreign and independent films, limited release features, Hollywood classics, cult favorites and documentaries.

Gift memberships from $25 to $100. Phone or write today for free information and list of films.

1-800-258-3456
Home Film Festival®
P.O. Box 2032, Scranton, PA 18501

Call for any book

• Immediate shipment worldwide • Credit cards or check • Ask about our overnight gift delivery nationwide • Free monthly New Title Forecast • Mail orders welcome • Open 24 hours every day • Free Holiday Catalog

BOOK CALL

1-800-255-2665
In CT or Worldwide 203-966-5470
FAX 1-203-966-4329
59 Elm Street, New Canaan, CT 06840

Any Recording By Phone or Mail

Discover the convenience of shopping from home for any CD or Tape in print. Our 240 pages of Rock, Jazz, Classical & Opera recordings are the world's largest music catalog. You'll find everything from Basie to Wagner, The Beatles to U-2.

BOSE EXPRESS MUSIC CATALOG

Now you can order your music by toll-free phone and get quick (UPS) home delivery.

Send $6.00 (refundable on your first order from the catalog) for our 50,000 title catalog with $50 in merchandise credits plus 1 **FREE** year of update catalogs, covering new releases and musical specials. Absolutely no obligation or unrequested shipments.

Call ☎ 1-800-233-6357
or send to
Bose Express Music, N990, 50 W. 17th Street
New York, NY 10011

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unable to reconcile the image of concert halls packed with Poles of all generations, of a free, liberal, cultivated, open order, with "*Jude Raus!*" scribbled here and there on city walls.

In truth, it is both. Polish anti-Semitism and Polish philo-Semitism have coexisted throughout the turbulent history of the country (though anti-Semitism has clearly dominated). Often they have coexisted in the same person. Perhaps they are both parts of a larger phenomenon that may be called Poland's "Jewish fixation," which has expressed itself in very curious ways. Where else, after all, can one find a zealously Catholic nation in which gefilte fish is served on Christmas Eve, and in which the most revered Romantic poet studied the Kabalah and awaited the coming of the Polish Messiah? It should come as no surprise that such a mixture of suppressed contradictions starts to simmer in moments of collective reckoning.

With the exception of Polish-Jewish writers, such as Adolf Rudnicki, Julian Stryjkowski, Bogdan Wojdowski, and Henryk Grynberg, and some powerful literary statements in the first years after the war, Polish literature has until now been conspicuously silent on the subject of the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations. For decades the subject remained a black hole in Polish letters, a source of uneasiness that many Polish writers confessed to only privately. Communist propaganda certainly did not take kindly to the subject, first for ideological reasons—such religious and ethnic distinctions were at odds with proletarian internationalism—and later in order to cover up their own shameless manipulations of it (such as the official "anti-Zionist" campaign of 1968). It is possible, though, that the Polish silence had deeper psychological reasons. To confront the subject from this perspective required a special kind of literary courage, a determination that Polish postwar literature, with few exceptions, was generally lacking: it required a readiness to reach beyond the familiar moral dichotomies, to unsettle the national myths, to complicate the Polish self-image at precisely the moment that the Polish self-image seemed most vulnerable and most precious.

In This Season of Waiting

Under certain conditions,
when the moon in the western sky
seems frozen there, for instance

even as the sun is rising in the east,
so that soon two sides of the coin
will be facing each other;

or when the snow
which is a stranger here
fills our trees with its cold flowers;

when the single
bluejay at the feeder
is so still

it could be enamelled there,
then the earth becomes an emblem
for whatever we believe.

LINDA PASTAN

And yet today hardly a Polish novel does not contain a Jewish subject, or at least a nostalgic memory of Jewish life in Poland. The old obsession with the presence of the Jews in Poland has become a new obsession with their absence. It is quite possible that it has been inspired by the sudden disappearance of the central theme of Polish writing over the last decades. As long as Communist totalitarianism was victorious and apparently omnipotent, it provided a powerful metaphor of struggle between the human spirit and Manichaean evil, universal entropy, the dark force of history. In the wake of its demise, however, it looks like little more than another cruel, but also vulgar and stupid, political system—no longer a subject, that is, for great moral drama.

Some writers found themselves without a subject quite literally in the middle of the page, and for some of those writers the fate of Poland's Jews must have appeared a fitting substitute: it referred to something more primary than ideology and invited a whole range of moral and philosophical interpretations. Surely some Polish writers discovered also that the "Jewish subject" is, in fact, also a Polish subject, and that the exploration of it may prove essential for the future of Poland as a modern, European nation, even if the only Jews in the Polish future are nostalgic visitors from remote places.

The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman by Andrzej Szczypiorski, a Polish writer, journalist, and recently a senator from the Solidarity ticket in the Polish parliament, is one of the most interesting attempts, though not an entirely successful one, at such a serious exploration. Set in wartime Warsaw, the novel consists of several portraits of Jews, Poles, and Germans whose fates intersect briefly as their separate worlds disintegrate in the universal conflagration. The central episode concerns Irma Seidenman, a Jewish woman of uncommon beauty and intelligence who is the widow of a famous scientist.

Thanks to her Slavic looks, she is able to survive outside the ghetto as Maria Gostomska, the widow of a Polish officer killed in the campaign of 1939, until one day she is recognized in the street by another Jew who tries to save his own life by delivering her to the Gestapo. The incident brings together a group of rescuers—a classical philologist, a young boy secretly in love with Irma, a socialist worker, and a *Volksdeutsche*—that arranges for Irma's release and extracts an apology from a Gestapo officer named Stuckler. No acts of heroism are performed, yet the chain of goodwill forms quickly and naturally. Everybody does his small part without hesitation, as a matter of simple decency and moral duty.

A quarter century later, in 1968, during an anti-Jewish purge staged by the Communist regime, the memory of the wartime act of human solidarity is brutally effaced, as Gostomska-Seidenman, now an official at the Ministry of Education, is insulted and deprived of her job and her homeland by three security officers. Now an old and bitter woman living in Paris, she is puzzled by the ease with which her bond with Poland has been destroyed, and disturbed that the ugly episode in the '60s seems to have more significance in her life than her rescue in the '40s by her Polish friends.

Here Szczypiorski touches on an issue that usually elicits protests from Polish quarters. Why do so many Jews who survived the war in Poland, many of them with Polish help, recall even minor Polish trespasses with the kind of moral anguish that seems to equate them with the horrors of the Holocaust? If there was anti-Semitism in Poland, and most reasonable Poles today will admit there was, it certainly did not cause the ovens of death to be built, it did not mark the Jews for total destruction, and it did not assist the murderers as it did in several other European countries. Isn't the blame being shifted, the argument goes, from the perpetrator of the crime to the helpless witnesses of it? And then the usual numbers are trotted out: so many Jews saved from certain death at great risk to their protectors, so many blackmailers executed by the Polish underground, so many couriers dispatched abroad for help, so many Polish names in the Yad Vashem Memorial.

Irma Seidenman, tormented by similar questions in her French exile, provides one possible explanation. Pondering the moment of her arrest by the Germans, she realizes that

> Stuckler had not humiliated her in the least. Not for a moment had she felt humiliated then, abased, stripped of her dignity, disgraced, because Stuckler had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wanted only to kill her, whereas those others, who years later came to her office . . . took away her right to be herself, the right to self-determination. . . . Stuckler was a phantom, a symbol of an inconsequential phenomenon, whereas these three who came to her office . . . were life that happened in all finality.

The destruction of the Jews was an evil of such proportions, the heroine seems to suggest, that it defied all moral categories. It was not an act of "immorality," it was a negation of morality in any conceivable form. Although it is doubtful that it could appear to Irma as an "inconsequential phenomenon," it might well seem a "phantom" without a human face. Poles, on the other hand, were real and tangible participants of the familiar world that had a habit of transforming itself periodically into a hostile, murderous environment. In Nazi-occupied Poland, they were part of a homeland that was turning into a graveyard. Their hostility, their contempt, even their indifference must have appeared to the Jews as the only visible explanation of their fate. What is more, to the Jews struggling for survival in wartime Poland, Poles were a constant enigma, an abiding possibility of salvation or destruction. Trusting and strangely unaware of these ambiguities during the war, Irma perceived them instantly in 1968, and it was this new perception that destroyed even her certainty about the past.

But Irma Seidenman's disappointment with Poland may have had still another source. The Poles were in a unique situation as the closest and the most intimate witnesses of the largest atrocity in history. The behavior of the security agents (and, though Szczypiorski does not mention it in his book, of certain sections of Polish society) in 1968 is particularly painful to Irma because it denies any significance to the previous encounter with ultimate evil. And yet it is almost unimaginable that such an encounter would leave the nation with its old prejudices, phobias, and myths. Surely those years must have done *something* to Poles, must have finally transformed their attitudes toward Jews as well as their sense of themselves.

The protagonists of Szczypiorski's novel seem aware that the act of witnessing would not leave them intact. When Irma's secret admirer Pawel bids farewell to his childhood companion, a Jewish boy named Henryk Fichtelbaum, he experiences the moment as the loss of a friend who takes away a part of his own memory. But he experiences it, too, as a historical caesura, beyond which looms a new, terrifying reality that defies any moral response. Why was it that later, after many years, Pawel remembered not only the figure of a boy in a double-breasted overcoat vanishing around the street corner, never again to appear in the world of the living, but also

> that dirty trail of smoke in the sky, like a rusty rag suspended above the rooftops of Warsaw? Why was the sky to seem to him from that moment on dirty, faded, even if now and then it was lit up by some heroic conflagration? . . . My European consciousness no longer exists, he told himself with sorrow; perhaps even it never existed, perhaps it was merely a delusion, a desire for an identity that has never been given us?

Many years later, during a meeting with Irma in Paris, Pawel discovers he has been living with "a kind of barbarian tragedy" without a liberating catharsis. "Could it be that Henryk had taken from him the right to freedom?"

The moment of farewell between the two boys, perhaps the most important moment in the novel, reveals the hopeful, wishful tone that underlies the book.

What did our Feminist Foremothers say about Abortion?

Elizabeth Cady Stanton "When we consider that women are treated as property, it is degrading to women that we should treat our children as property to be disposed of as we see fit." (letter to Julia Ward Howe, October 16, 1873)

Susan B. Anthony "I deplore the horrible crime of child murder...We want prevention, not merely punishment. We must reach the root of the evil...It is practiced by those whose inmost souls revolt from the dreadful deed...No matter what the motive, love of ease, or a desire to save from suffering the unborn innocent, the woman is awfully guilty who commits the deed...but oh! thrice guilty is he who drove her to the desperation which impelled her to the crime." (The Revolution, July 8, 1869)

Matilda Gage "The crime of abortion is not one in which the guilt lies solely or even chiefly with the woman...I hesitate not to assert that most of this crime of 'child murder', 'abortion', 'infanticide', lies at the door of the male sex." (The Revolution, April 9, 1868)

Mattie Brinkerhoff "When a man steals to satisfy hunger, we may safely conclude that there is something wrong in society--so when a woman destroys the life of her unborn child, it is an evidence that...she has been greatly wronged." (The Revolution, September 2, 1869)

Victoria Woodhull "Every woman knows that if she were free, she would never bear an unwished-for child, nor think of murdering one before its birth." (Wheeling, W VA Evening Standard, November 17, 1875)

For more quotations and further information, write:
Feminists for Life of America, 811 E. 47th Street, Kansas City, MO 64110 Membership $10

Sponsored by: Feminists for Life Education Project, 16309 Pine Street, Minnetonka, MN 55345
(Donations to FFLEP are tax deductible)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If only, the reader is tempted to say: if only everybody had behaved as Mrs. Seidenman's friends did, if only everybody grasped the meaning of the conflagration as clearly as Pawel grasped it, if only the tragic separation of the two nations, who for centuries had lived uneasily together, had been as painful to Poles, as fully apprehended, as Pawel's separation from Henryk was.

Yet Szczypiorski leaves no doubt that reality was often different. He calls on the image made famous by Czeslaw Milosz in his poem "Campo dei Fiori," written in 1943 in Warsaw: a crowd of unconcerned Poles having fun on a merry-go-round placed by the Germans next to the wall of the burning ghetto. "Oh Poland, oh Poles!" mutters Pawel and Henryk's schoolteacher a moment before he dies of a heart attack, overwhelmed by "the barrel organ, the crack of the machine gun, the screams of the Jews, the racket of the merry-go-round mechanism." Later Szczypiorski refers to the Polish tendency to deny the uniqueness of the Holocaust and to present the destruction of Jews in Poland as a part of *Polish* suffering:

> People who years later came to live on top of Henryczek Fichtelbaum's bones did not often think of him, and if they did it was with a certain pride and vanity that here they were, the greatest martyrs under the sun . . . they were profiting from someone else's martyrdom, which is always stupid and dishonorable.

The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman is a book about the end of a world, Polish and Jewish, violated by an invading force and ruptured by internal contradictions. Yet in Polish the novel has an ironic title. It is called *The Beginning*. When Pawel looks after the disappearing silhouette of Henryk, he realizes that "a new chapter was beginning, one without end, which would last for the rest of his life. . . . The time of partings, good-byes, and eternal fears was beginning." The fate of the Jews is an irreparable loss suffered by this world, an empty space that came to haunt the next generation of Poles, provoking tortured exercises of self-accusation and self-exoneration.

Still, the book leaves the reader with several important questions unanswered. What was it that the Poles, the nation absorbed in its own martyrdom, really saw when they were forced to watch the martyrdom of others? What were their true reactions then, and how do they see them now? How did the experience affect their moral sense and their collective subconsciousness? Szczypiorski makes us aware of these questions, yet he never confronts them directly. His characters seem more like walking moral programs than living people entangled in a vexing reality.

The Jews are secular, assimilated, prosperous, and surrounded by trusted Polish friends. Irma Seidenman treats both her Jewish and Polish identity as a fact of merely practical significance. There is not a hint in her of the moral tribulation of "Aryan Jews," those who survived the war by assuming Polish identities. Passing the walls of the Jewish quarter, she finds it difficult to identify with its inhabitants because "she didn't have her own dead in the ghetto." The Poles in Szczypiorski's novel are disarmingly simple in their nobility. They do their part bravely and die with dignity. Although they often muse about Poland, war, and the future, they never betray any hesitation or confusion about their roles, or any fear. They know their place in the historical drama from the very beginning and accept it without comment. Their moral instincts never lead them astray.

Even more important, the Poles and the Jews in the novel exist in a kind of social vacuum. Almost without exception they are loners living orderly lives without spouses or families. They never engage in a genuine confrontation with their environment. Anti-Semitism is presented as undeniable, but only in the anonymous crowd on the merry-go-round. For Irma, it is an abstract fact on the periphery of her life. For the socialist, it is one of many vices of the "old" Poland that would be eradicated by the victorious proletariat. For the others, the phenomenon hardly ever enters their field of vision. In real life, however, Henryk Fichtelbaum's father, a lawyer who wants to be "more European and libertine than the greatest European libertines in Paris," must have had some encounters with anti-Semitic gangs at Warsaw University; and the Poles must have pondered the duplicitous appeal by a Christian group to help the Jews, even though "they themselves brought the calamity upon them." Such facts, however, never appear in the book, and they seem to have no bearing on the heroes' thoughts and acts. The only intriguing character in the novel is a Jew who converted to Catholicism while hiding in a convent. After the war he stubbornly denies his old identity even to those who knew him as a Jew, and finally he succumbs to the most grotesque form of anti-Semitism; but he is presented merely as an unhappy buffoon, and his psychological paradox is not fully investigated.

What is left out in Szczypiorski's novel, in other words, is perhaps the most important unexplored subject in Polish literature. The experience of the Holocaust did not cure the Polish mind of the "Jewish fixation." It buried that fixation under layers of horror, guilt, denial, and rationalization. Between the narrow extremes of heroism and ignominy, troubled memories lie; and compassion and grief still mix, in those memories, with prejudice. If one stirs that sediment, strange and contradictory forms come to the surface. In a story by the Polish writer Zofia Nalkowska, published in 1948, there appears a scene that recalls the testimonials in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*; an old, illiterate woman who witnessed the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto in 1943 tells that story, mixing her most genuine compassion with the most vicious anti-Semitic propaganda, until the reader discovers that her commentary is a perverse psychological defense against something that her mind cannot face.

It is a pity that Szczypiorski failed to explore this forbidden zone of collective subconsciousness. Despite his admirable intentions to tackle some difficult and painful problems, the general message of *The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman* seems obvious and hollow: there was anti-Semitism in Poland, but there were also decent, honorable Poles. To go beyond such truisms, however, may be more difficult than it seems. The task requires new words and new leaps of imagination, but most of all it requires a Polish writer's learning to become totally detached from his own tradition—to become not anti-Polish, but perhaps a-Polish.

Polish-Jewish writers have described their experience forcefully, but we still

Classical MusicLovers' Exchange®
Nationwide link between unattached music lovers.
Box 31, Pelham, N. Y. 10803, 800-233-CMLS

HOME STUDY COURSE
in economics. A 10-lesson study that will throw light on today's baffling problems. Tuition free—small charge for materials.
Write Henry George Institute, 121 E. 30th Street, New York, NY 10016,

Terrific New Word Game For The 90's!
WordHound
Knowledge · Wit · Strategy
Vocabulary · Luck Of The Draw
GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFT
1-800-227-3769
MC · VISA · AMEX $32.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

await a teller of the Polish part of the story. The story is no longer about Poles and Jews. It is not about nostalgia for the departed world, not about making amends for past trespasses. Today it can only be about Poles—about who Poles are, about what Poles can become. Perhaps *The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman* is indeed, as its Polish title suggests, just the beginning.

JAROSLAW ANDERS is a Polish writer living in Washington, D.C.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 4*

To the editors:

In your scolding of Henry Louis Gates for his testimony at the 2 Live Crew trial, you write: "There are few sights sorrier than the sight of an intellectual in solidarity with the street." That depends, of course, on what the metaphor is supposed to mean; "the street" can mean the lives and aspirations of ordinary people as opposed to the experiences of those enclosed in an "ivory tower." The word the writer was probably hunting for was "gutter" or "sewer."

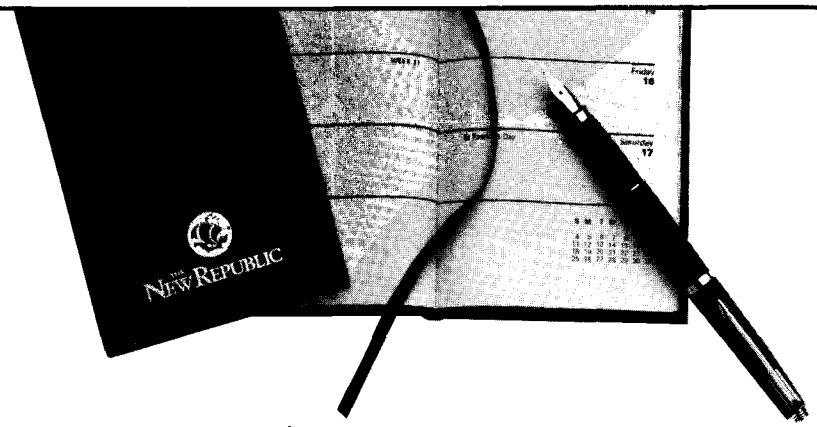
Gates is also condemned for not thinking of the effects of his views on blacks struggling to attain a decent education. Gates is a black intellectual, but must all black intellectuals—or, for that matter, any intellectual who identifies with an ethnic group—have to ask themselves, "Is it good for blacks?" Such a demand politicizes intellectual work and defines a writer in terms of ascribed characteristics rather than the merits of his or her work. That definition reinforces racist modes of thought.

MURRAY HAUSKNECHT
Long Island City, New York

The editors reply:

Mr. Gates's letter is a dodge. We took issue not with his analysis of the condition of the First Amendment in the '90s, about which we have expressed our own anxieties, but with his extraordinary role as an apologist for 2 Live Crew and its views of black life. On this matter, his reply is silent.

Mr. Hausknecht, of course, is right: black intellectuals must not ask only "Is it good for blacks?" The problem is that Mr. Gates has been asking, and answering, that question, implicitly and explicitly, throughout his work, and most emphatically in the affair of 2 Live Crew. Yes, yes, it was Burns, not Shakespeare, whose love was like a red, red rose. We thank all of our readers who noticed this. A computer glitch deleted the point, along with a joke (Burns, baby, Burns) to drive it home. •



Announcing The New Republic 1991 Pocket Diary

For the past few years, we have been giving pocket diaries, embossed in gold with The New Republic name and logo, to our writers and editors and special friends in the media. The diaries have been so popular that we have decided to make them available to our subscribers at a low cost, only $10.95 each.

The diaries are made by Letts of London, whose diaries were favored by Charles Dickens and George Bernard Shaw. Each diary includes weekly calendars with space to write down daily appointments, plus a wine vintage chart, a list of important toll-free telephone numbers, a list of world holidays, metric equivalents, a calorie counter, fifteen blank pages for notes, telephone numbers, and addresses, and more.

The pages are edged in gilt and carry a silken page marker. The diary itself is dark blue with featherweight light-blue pages.

It's elegant and easy to use. The cost to non-subscribers is $12.95, but we're offering it to subscribers for just $10.95; *including* postage.

Available to Our Subscribers, for a Limited Time

YES, Send me the New Republic pocket diary immediately (Please allow 2 to 4 weeks for delivery).

☐ I am a subscriber, $10.95

☐ I am *not* a subscriber, $12.95

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Write to: Pocket Diary, The New Republic
1220 19th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036

Check or Money-Order must accompany each order.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WASHINGTON DIARIST

The lord of Flatbush

IN FLATBUSH, WHEN I WAS GROWing up, we dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree. The houses were semi-detached, which was all the detachment we had. They were red brick structures with cozy, chattering stoops and brilliant rose bushes, on stable streets visited by tinkling ice cream trucks and shrieking fishmongers, tucked between the great local boulevards, Coney Island Avenue, where you shopped, and Ocean Parkway, where you prayed. The Jews and the Italians lived easily together. I was perplexed when our neighbor turned into the driveway with a deer strapped to the roof of his station wagon, and I expect that our neighbor wondered why my father and his children set fire to bits of bread and feathers in the yard every spring; but all the fathers worked hard, all the mothers commanded all the households, all the kids went to "parochial" school, and our finery on Saturday morning was matched by their finery on Sunday morning, which demonstrated our common interest in a hiatus of holiness.

WE FOUND IN FLATBUSH WHAT WE hoped to find, which was security. Physical security, religious security, economic security: for my parents, those were unnatural things. They had watched the vines and the fig trees of their parents erased from the face of the earth by the Germans in Poland. Since the world did not end, they picked themselves up and bet against their experience and made a family and settled it on East 8th Street, near the yeshiva and the shul, and far away from anything that might interfere with the healing. Normality was their wildest dream, but the days in Flatbush were normal. For me, too; the yarmulke on my head did not impair my confidence that I had a place in Dion and the Belmonts', and even the Blues Project's, universe. Though the texts that I studied and the tales that I was told were more than enough to sap a boy of boyhood, I was not completely sapped. All around me there was order, and love, and work. Flatbush was a place without fear.

NO MORE. OR SO I CONCLUDED from the reports of Rabbi Meir Kahane's funeral at the Young Israel of Ocean Parkway. Kahane, of course, was a great fear artist. The Jewish Defense League, which he founded in 1968, and to which I briefly belonged (see "The Demons of the Jews," TNR, November 11, 1985), set out to expose the normality of my parents, of the other survivors of the extermination, of the Jews of America, of the Jews of Israel, as an illusion. For there were enemies everywhere. There were the *shvartzes*. There were the Nazis. There were the Arabs. There were the liberals. There were the *shiksas*. There were the Russians. There were the intellectuals. There were the Puerto Ricans. There were the reporters. There were the self-hating Jews—for the self-loving Jews, the deadliest enemy of all. And all these enemies were only the contemporary representations of an eternal enmity.

IT WAS IN THE YEARS SINCE THE late '60s, when the Six-Day War made the Jews of Brooklyn high and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville teachers' strike made them low, that Jewish fear became politically useful, that the Holocaust became a hobby, that the tolerant and rational and meliorist elements in Jewish life were overwhelmed by rage and an apocalyptic excitation and a worship of power. I've been back to Brooklyn many times, but I was not prepared for what I read about the event at the Young Israel of Ocean Parkway. Its rabbi, a prominent figure in the Orthodox world, referred to the racist in the coffin as "a *tsaddik*," or saint, and "a giant," whose death was like the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Rabbi Moses Tendler, a biologist and a Talmudist at Yeshiva University in New York, blamed President Bush for the killing and pronounced that God "spoke to Rabbi Kahane clearly," but his "prophecy" had gone unheeded. The rabbi can have his politics, but the coarseness of his theology beggars, well, belief. He should be drummed out of his institution, whose college was founded in 1928 bravely to further *Torah u'madda*, Torah and science, "the *harmonious combination* of modern culture and ways of life with the knowledge of and devotion to Torah in its entirety." (The italics are its founder's.)

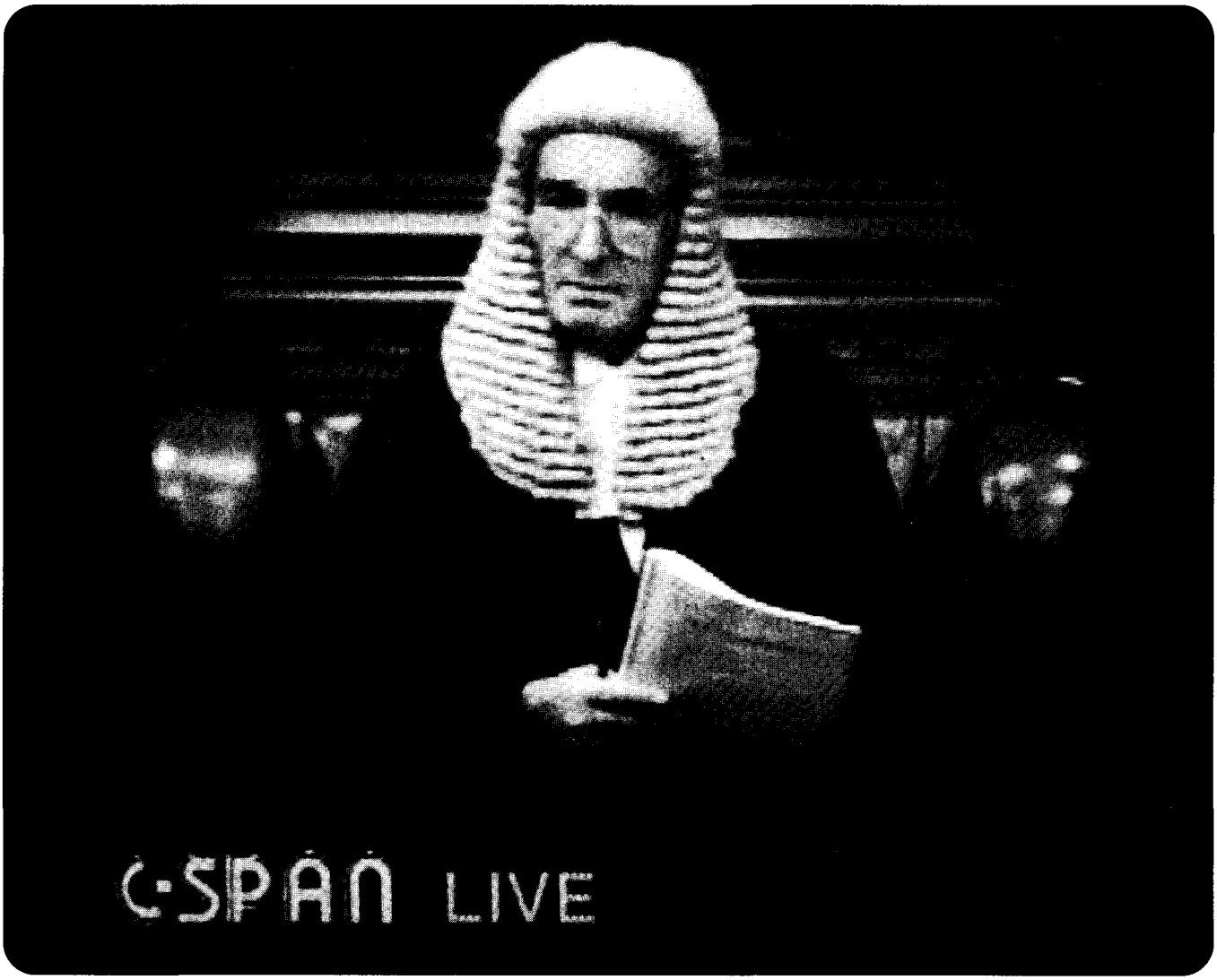
THERE WERE OFFENDING UNBElievers, too. The Israeli consulate in Manhattan dispatched a representative to Brooklyn to honor Israel's least honorable citizen. Seymour Reich, the American exilarch, or president of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, was unconscionably among the mourners. (I wonder when he last set foot in Flatbush.) Reich's statement to the press said that "whatever one thought about [Kahane's] political program, his shocking assassination will be deplored by friend and foe alike." A blow for moral clarity. Later Reich explained to a reporter that Kahane had "a racist philosophy," but he went to Brooklyn "because a Jew was assassinated." The deceased would have understood. Also present was Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League, consecrated to combat all forms of racism, or almost all, and an alumnus, like myself, of the Yeshiva of Flatbush, in those years a force for a decent, cultivated Zionism and an enlightened, observant Judaism. I wonder how Foxman would froth were Benjamin Hooks to appear, excuses and all, at the funeral of Farrakhan.

AND THERE WAS MORE. THE OP-ED pages were riddled with right-thinking Jews flexing their negative capability. Alan Dershowitz, who defended the JDL creep who made the bomb that killed a secretary in Sol Hurok's office in 1972, remembered "Marty Kahane" and weirdly called his murder "the ultimate censorship." "Rabbi Meir Kahane asked the most perceptive and challenging questions, to which he gave the most simpleminded and dangerous answers." The dove Bernard Avishai was moved by memories of a meeting with Kahane in 1968: "I felt the power of his despair. Even over dinner, he seemed in the grip of his mission: the suffering servant. His voice seemed to be holding back weeping, his eyes were sullen, distracted." Walter Reich, deploring Kahane's "racist" call for the expulsion of the Palestinians, cautioned against the dismissal of "Kahane's challenging demographic and social analyses" and attacked Israeli liberals for not hearing him out.

GENTLEMEN, PLEASE, DRY YOUR eyes. The worry that the absorption of a million Arabs into Israel would force a choice between its Jewishness and its democracy was not Kahane's contribution; it was apparent to many good people in Israel, while Kahane was busy in Brooklyn hustling himself onto the front page of the *Times*. Nor was the movement for Soviet Jewry his contribution; historians will record the almost forgotten names of Moshe Decter, Jacob Birnbaum, and Glenn Richter, and record, too, that Kahane's contribution was verbal and physical violence. This man only poisoned. He did not invent Jewish pride, he disgraced it. He did not save anybody from anything. He was directly responsible for the death of innocent people. His killing was a repulsive act, but the Jewish community lost nothing. Obviously the Jews have enemies, but my parents were right: enemies are not all we have. And Hitler is dead. And Israel is strong. And America is free. Not even Jews have a reason to hate the world.

LEON WIESELTIER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



UNCOMMON TELEVISION

It's a fact. C-SPAN's international programming makes for uncommon television. Whether it's Speaker Bernard Weatherill presiding over the British House of Commons or a live viewer call-in from a reunited Germany -- C-SPAN's international coverage offers America's cable viewers an in-depth and uncommon look into the workings of governments all over the world.

Seven years ago, C-SPAN provided live coverage of the Canadian Parliament. Since then, cable's public affairs network has expanded its international programming to include the Supreme Soviet, the Japanese Diet, the European Parliament, the French Senate, the German Bundestag, the Hungarian National Assembly and the Polish Sejm.

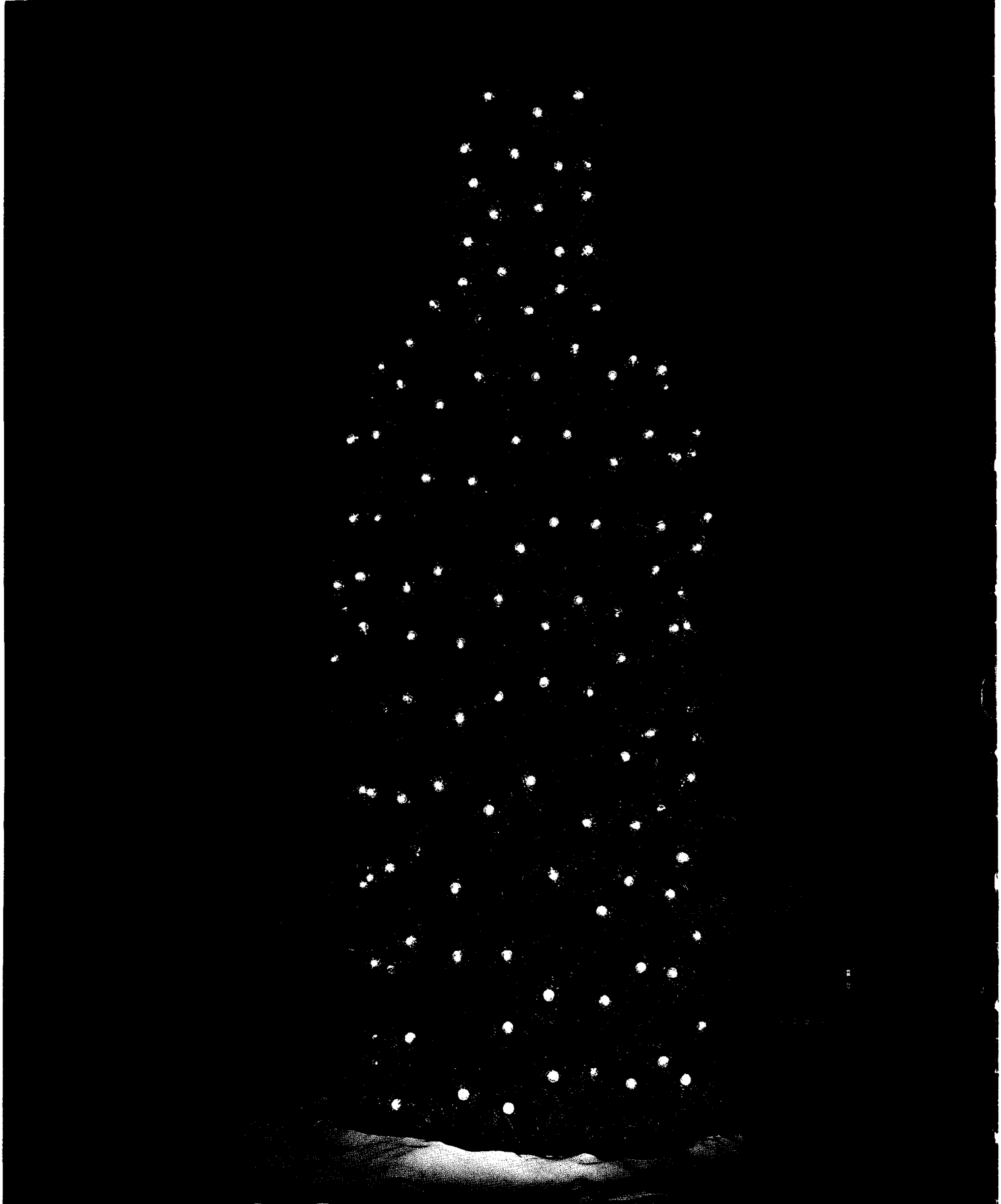
For diverse, in-depth programming that will help you better understand our government and others, look for the **uncommon** on C-SPAN.

C-SPAN

Open to the Public

C-SPAN is a public service of the cable television industry.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



TO SEND A GIFT OF ABSOLUT® VODKA (EXCEPT WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW) CALL 1-800-243-3787.
PRODUCT OF SWEDEN. 40 AND 50% ALC/VOL (80 AND 100 PROOF). 100% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. © 1990 CARILLON IMPORTERS, LTD., TEANECK, NJ.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED